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Daily Report
Central Eurasia

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Russia: Federal Forces Said To Attack Sernovodsk, Chechnya

LD0303195596 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 3 Mar 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There are reports from Chechnya again about a sharp deterioration of the situation. Despite all the contradictory reports, there is no doubt that a broad-scale military operation is now under way in the area of the Chechen village of Sernovodsk. We have just received a report from our special correspondent Leonid Varebrus.

[Varebrus, over video of villagers] We did not manage to reach Sernovodsk this morning, which was on fire even then. We heard details about the beginning of combat operations from residents at a checkpoint. But we could hear the rolling sounds of bombing even here. We could also see smoke over the village area. [passage omitted]

[Begin recording] [Unidentified female speaker] This morning at dawn they began bombing. Five or six of us managed to escape. What did we see? We saw smoke.

[Unidentified male speaker] At 0630 this morning, shelling suddenly started from the direction of Samashki. Two houses were set on fire immediately. Then the shelling continued. The village came under fire also from the direction of Asinovskiy. [end recording]

[Varebrus] The ultimatum demands of the Russian command, about which the head of the Sernovodsk administration reported in a special statement, listed the immediate handover of armored vehicles, anti-aircraft installations and infantry weapons, and the handover of 100 rebels to the federal forces. We have heard no details of reports about the demands being rejected by the residents.

[Begin unidentified speaker recording] Yesterday we were told that commissions were set up, and that things will be sorted out locally. An agreement or a contract will be signed. We were told that the Russian federal troops will not shell the village and sort out the situation by 1000. But from 0600 this morning until the time they set they carried out very intensive shelling from all types of weapons. [end recording]

[Varebrus] Since last night about 2,000 people have left the village, mainly women and children. In total in Sernovodsk there are 15,000 residents, and about the same number of refugees from other areas of Chechnya. By this hour it is known that the first strike was carried out at 0730 a.m. from all types of weapons, affecting the local college. It is so far impossible to check this information, but it is known that the center of Sernovodsk and the mosque and several resort buildings are on fire.

Russia: Federal Troops 'Ambushed' by Chechen Militants

LD0303121396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1008 GMT 3 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Boris Kipkeyev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 3 Mar (Itar-Tass) — Fighting is raging on in the Chechen village of Sernovodsk 45 km west of Groznyy as reported at 1200 hours [0900 GMT]. Federal troops, which entered the village searching for militants' shelters and fortifications, were ambushed by the Dudayevites and opened retaliatory fire. There are casualties on both sides, and it has not yet been possible to tally the exact number of the dead and the wounded. This was reported today by Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, commander of the federal group in Chechnya, by telephone from the suburban district of Khankala near Groznyy where the federal command's headquarters are located.

He said that the movement into the village of some of the troops, who were blockading Sernovodsk, was preceded by several days of intensive talks with the local authorities on the disarming of the militants hiding in the village. It was decided on 1 March to resume the talks on the following day; however, the other party ignored the decision on 2 March. For this reason, this morning at 0600 [0300 GMT], as has been previously agreed with the elders and the head of the Sernovodsk local administration, a clearing-off operation began aimed at eliminating the militants and weapons from the territory.

When the federal troops entered the village, the militants opened an intensive fire at about 0745, the commander said. They were firing from the Asta sanatorium in the northern part of Sernovodsk. Another ambush was staged by the militants in the building of a local secondary school not far from the sanatorium.

The general blamed the militants for aggravating the situation. He said they were responsible because they were first to attack the soldiers. Representatives of the Chechen government led by First Deputy Prime Minister Abdulla Bugayev flew out to Sernovodsk this morning to examine on the spot whether the armed conflict had been provoked by the Dudayevites, Tikhomirov said.

As has become known to ITAR-TASS correspondent Aleksandr Kharchenko in Groznyy, Sernovodsk has 12,000-13,000 inhabitants.

Russia: Tikhomirov Describes Situation in Sernovodsk

LD0303194096 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 3 Mar 96

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] We have managed to get in touch with our special correspondent in Chechnya, Aleksey Samoletov, and to ask him to obtain information about what is going on in Sernovodsk. Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, the commander of the federal troops in Chechnya, has given our program an interview about the events in Sernovodsk.

[Begin Tikhomirov recording] At present the tension point has moved to the north of Sernovodsk. At 0600 this morning the federal troops jointly with the units of the Chechen Interior Ministry and of the Russian Interior Ministry and of the Russian Defense Ministry began to carry out the inspection of the area, with a view to finding out whether there are any illegal armed formations there. At 0745 fire was opened in the area of the Assa Sanatorium, which is in the north of Sernovodsk. The troops were forced to block the sanatorium and in fact the fighting started then. After some of the rebels were destroyed in that area, the troops moved on [words indistinct] in Sernovodsk. But sudden fire was opened from there, fighting started. It is still continuing now. There are dead and injured. The enemy also has big losses. But possibly for the first time in the history of the Chechen events, taking into account that the federal troops are acting jointly with the Chechen Interior Ministry, members of the Chechen OMON [special purpose militia detachment] special forces have also suffered. In other words, Chechens opened fire against Chechens. At the moment we know that some of the Chechen OMON forces have been wounded. They are being evacuated and help is being rendered to them. But the incident itself is of course a terrible example of vandalism which shows once more who wants peace in the land and who does not.

Russia: Tikhomirov Blames Ingush President for Sernovodsk Events

LD0303211796 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2000 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Combat operations have been under way in Sernovodsk on the Chechen-Ingush border for almost 24 hours. Andrey Murashev, our special correspondent, reports by telephone.

[Murashev] Today's events in Sernovodsk are the result of the position taken by Ruslan Aushev, president of the Ingush Republic, on the North Caucasian conflict. That is what Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, commander of the temporary joint group of federal forces in Chechnya, told the All-Russian Television and Radio Company on the 3 March. Tikhomirov cannot understand why Aushev tolerates on his territory bandit groups which, having received appropriate training, attacked the federal troops. [passage omitted]

The fighting is still under way now. There are wounded and killed. According to Tikhomirov, it is too early to give figures. But it's for the first time in the history of Chechen events, the commander noted, that Chechens — servicemen of the local OMON [Special Purpose Militia Detachment] — have been killed by Chechens. Seven of them were wounded by the evening of 3 March. This fact shows once again who wants peace here and who does not.

Russia: Media Barred From Sernovodsk Combat Area

LD0403103696 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1000 GMT 4 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The mass media are not being allowed into the combat area of the Chechen village of Sernovodsk, INTERFAX was told by Ruslan Martagov, press secretary to the head of Chechnya. According to Martagov, for a second day now journalists are not being allowed to pass the federal forces' checkpoints going towards the village. He said that although information coming in from the combat area was contradictory, eyewitness information from Sernovodsk does indicate that there are no casualties among the village residents.

Russia: Chechen Militants Attack Federal Roadblocks Near Khankala

LD0203182296 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1700 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [Chechen] militants fired on federal army roadblocks on the outskirts of Groznyy late this afternoon. Our special correspondent in Groznyy, Yuriy Arkhipov, has the details:

[Arkhipov] At about 1600, the militants fired on two roadblocks — No. 15 and No. 16 — several kilometers from Khankala where the headquarters of the Temporary Joint Forces of the Federal Troops is situated. At first servicemen tried to repulse the attack by Dudayev's supporters on their own, using weapons available to them. Several minutes later they received reinforcements from Khankala. During that time the militants also fired on a food convoy travelling along the Argun-Groznyy road. It seems that the militants were near the village of [name indistinct] and were firing on the federal troops from there. Large-caliber machine-guns, sub-machine guns, and grenade throwers were used in the attack. The situation worsened after dark. Following an hour-long intensive exchange of fire, two Mi-24 helicopters of the Russian troops took off to attack the militants' firing positions. The fighting stopped soon after that, at about 1800.

Roman Sokolovskiy, the head of the press center of the Temporary Group of the Federal Troops in Chechnya, has said in an interview that, according to preliminary information, about 30 or 40 militants attacked the federal army roadblocks and the food convoy in the area of Khankala airport. It is not yet possible to say how many Dudayev's supporters were killed in the attack. Sokolovskiy also said that this had been the second attack on federal army roadblocks in the past 24 hours.

Yuriy Arkhipov, Radio Russia news service, Groznyy.

Russia: Exchange of Fire Breaks Out in Central Groznyy

LD0103140296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1354 GMT 1 Mar 96

[By Aleksandr Kharchenko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, March 1 (Itar-Tass) — An exchange of fire broke out in central Groznyy on Friday afternoon and lasted for about one hour. Witnesses say that fire was opened on a checkpoint of federal forces situated near the bridge across the river Sunzha. Fire was opened from a house being restored by the republican Ministry of Emergencies. Fire arms and grenade throwers were used.

Itar-Tass correspondent so far has no official information about what has happened. The centre of the Chechen capital has been blocked by units of the Interior Ministry of Chechnya.

Russia: Defense Ministry Refutes Attacks on Villages

LD0203212696 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2000 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] According to the POST FACTUM AGENCY, this morning the Ingush settlement of Arshty was subjected to rocket attacks and two local residents were injured. The Ingushetia president's press secretary Kureysh Agasiyev told this to an agency correspondent. Although the Russian Defense Ministry categorically refutes the shooting, the leadership of Ingushetia stresses that because of military operations near Bamut residents of Arshty are constantly facing serious danger.

Today the situation was unexpectedly aggravated in the Chechen village of Sernovodsk, only 10 km from the border with Ingushetia.

[Begin correspondent Varebrus recording] Today, immediately after the Ingush village of Arshty they moved to Chechnya, to the village of Sernovodsk. According to rumors, federal forces intended to start military operations by evening to seize arms and to eliminate Dudayev's fighters. [passage omitted]

While we were talking a number of armored vehicles appeared and at the same time, shell explosions could be heard indicating that military operations had already started. Those fleeing have been received in the neighboring Ingush village of Arzhinikizovskaya. [end recording]

Russia: Baku-Stavropol Gas Pipeline Section Blown Up in Chechnya

LD0203165596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1406 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 2 (Interfax) — Unidentified criminals yesterday blew up a section of the Baku-Stavropol gas pipeline between the Kobi and Noviye Shchedriniy communities, 10 kilometers from the Shchelkovskaya village in Chechnya, a local interior department spokesman has reported. No one was hurt. Gas supply was suspended, an investigation is underway, the source said.

13 crimes, including six murders and one robbery, were registered over the past 24 hours..

In Staraya Sunzha, a village near Groznyy, police detained two local residents and confiscated from them a large quantity of opium, prepared for sale. The drug dealers will face trial.

Fires flared up at the oil well N 97 near the Tolstoy-Yurt village and at a section of an oil pipeline near the Goryachevodsk community of the Oktyabrskiy region. Firemen and rescue workers arrived at the scenes of trouble. Detectives are trying to find the causes of the incidents.

Russia: Federal Troops Still Block Bamut Suburbs in Chechnya

LD0203171596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1406 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Mar 2 (Interfax) — The situation in and around the town of Bamut in Chechnya's west, close to the administrative border with Ingushetia, has remained unchanged for a third day now. The federal troops are blocking Bamut's northern suburbs, a spokesman for the headquarters of federal troops told Interfax on Saturday.

According to him, on Saturday the federal troops took no active measures to suppress the weapons emplacements of Dudayev's militants, who had got entrenched in the hills surrounding Bamut.

The operation designed to suppress the weapons emplacements, the militants have been using to subject federal troops to constant shellings and attacks, involves aircraft and artillery, the spokesman said.

According to the information obtained by the federal command, Bamut serves as the biggest base in the west of Chechnya for Dudayev's militants.

Earlier spokesmen for the federal command said that, according to some reports, there are over 300 militants in Bamut.

Russia: Yeltsin, FSB Chief Barsukov Discuss Chechnya

LD0203133996 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1310 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 2 Mar (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin held a meeting today with Nikolay Barsukov, Director of the Federal Security Service [FSB], at which they "devoted special attention" to the situation in the Chechen Republic and ways to achieve a Chechen settlement, the public relations center of the Federal Security Service reported today.

They also discussed the fight against crime and primarily against terrorism, as well as "urgent problems of the country's social and political life," the press release says.

The Russian head of state and the Federal Security Service director also considered "improving the structure of the Federal Security Service and furthering its effectiveness," the public relations center said.

Russia: Yeltsin Accepts Chechen Official's Resignation

LD0103183496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1822 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 1 (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Friday accepted resignation of Nikolay Semenov from his duties of head of the regional department of federal executive bodies in the Chechen Republic in the rank of deputy prime minister, the presidential press service reported on Friday. Semenov was appointed to the post in January 1995.

Russia: Yegorov: Major Combat Actions in Chechnya 'Are Over'

LD0203155996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1548 GMT 2 Mar 96

[By Vyacheslav Bondarenko and Andrey Surzhanskiy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ROSTOV-ON-DON, March 2 (Itar-Tass) — Major combat actions in Chechnya are over because the bulk of rebel forces has been destroyed, Kremlin chief of staff Nikolay Yegorov said.

Speaking at a press conference in Rostov-on-Don on Saturday, Yegorov said that the remaining "bandit formations" will be destroyed within the next two months and the people of Chechnya and neighbouring regions will be able to return to normal peaceful life.

Russia: Chechen Premier Ready To Hold Talks With 'Anyone'

LD0303174196 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 3 Mar 96

[From the "Segodnya" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] The conflict is developing according to a single scenario here in Chechnya. The positions of the military are still being shelled and Russian soldiers are still dying. Peaceful inhabitants are suffering along with them.

Despite the claims by the leaders of the official Chechen government that Dzhokhar Dudayev does not have real forces, it is supporters who are putting up resistance to the federal army and staging provocations practically every day in Groznyy itself.

The head of the Chechen republic, Doku Zavgayev, is still convinced that peace talks with all influential political forces are the only way to settle the conflict in Chechnya. In his opinion, only an internal Chechen dialogue is capable of removing the existing differences and to reconcile the irreconcilables.

[Begin Zavgayev recording] I am ready to sit down at the table with anyone at all if that helped my people get out of that crisis, to overcome that senseless, pointless confrontation which has led to numerous casualties. That is, I am seeking peace and on the path to peace I am ready to consult, seek advice, seek compromises with anybody at all. [end recording]

Representatives of the Chechen roundtable uniting spokesmen of over 20 parties and movements of the republic are planning to hold in Groznyy on 10 March a sitting of their coalition council. It is thought that closest supporters of Dzhokhar Dudayev will also take part in its work.

Russia: Zavgayev, Heads of Chechen Regions To Sign Accords

LD0203180196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1624 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, March 2 (Interfax) — (Moscow-backed) Head of the Chechen Republic Doku Zavgayev today met with the heads of five Chechen mountainous regions who intend to sign the treaties on peace and accord with the (Moscow-backed) Chechen government and the Russian federal authorities, a representative of the Chechen government told Interfax Saturday.

Zavgayev will not force the signing of such agreements, the same source said. He quoted Zavgayev as saying that "the republic's government needs firm guarantees from the administrations and residents of these regions that the treaty will be respected."

Those at the sitting considered problems regarding the economic development of Chechnya's mountainous areas. They decided to work out a special development program and a separate project to build several important utilities and roads, the Chechen governmental representative said.

Zavgayev said he favored the participation of a wide range of Chechen political parties and movements in inter-Chechen dialogue, the same source said. However, Zavgayev doubted whether former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev, who has proposed that he mediate the settlement in Chechnya, was capable of seriously influencing the normalization of the situation in Chechnya, the same source said.

Russia: Grachev Ready To Meet 'Former' Chechen Leadership

LD0203195996 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 2 Mar 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received a reportage from Rostov where Defense Minister Grachev is and is also discussing the Chechen subject. The minister today inspected military hardware being used in the North Caucasus and made a rather unexpected statement, a sensation of a kind. The military may again consent to contacts with the Dudayevite leadership.

[Correspondent Anatoliy Maksimchuk] The minister is planning to visit and check combat readiness of units attached to the North Caucasian Military District from the airborne troops and rapid deployment forces that will work directly in conditions of military conflict. Replying to the question of his coming visit to Chechnya, General Grachev said:

[Begin Grachev recording] I am not concealing the fact that I will no doubt go there, to Chechnya. Of course, I am not planning to talk to bandits. But if it proves possible, then I am ready to meet the leadership — the former leadership — of the government which was in Chechnya, and even in conditions of one to one. Well, perhaps with one or two bodyguards on each side. I am not afraid of that of course.

I am not planning to meet Shamil Basayev or any of those bandits. If Dudayev wants to meet me, certainly I will meet him whoever is against it or whoever may criticize us. Chechnya is part of Russia. It is our Russian territory. Only from these positions will we examine peace on this component part of our Russian territory. [end recording]

Russia: Basayev Receives Money Allocated for Restoration

LD0103172096 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2206 GMT 29 Feb 96

[From the "Local Time" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent Konovalov] Hello, our weekly information program "Local Time" is on air. This is Ivan Konovalov, in the studio. The incident in Ingushetia in which 13 Russian servicemen and four local residents lost their lives has, for the first time, created a divergence of opinion among political experts. Many of them believe that the shelling of the Ingush village of Arshty was more of a political than military nature. However, what had actually happened there will be revealed, most likely, by the results of the Russian procuracy investigation. [passage omitted]

[Begin G. Osipov recording, member of the Russian Academy of Sciences] This is an attempt to turn the Chechen war into a North Caucasian war with the aim of declaring an emergency situation once again and postpone the elections. [passage omitted] [end recording]

[Konovalov] Everyone in Chechnya now says this war is commercial — the federal servicemen, the Chechen guerrillas, and civilians alike. [passage omitted]

[Begin Shamil Basayev recording, Chechen field commander] For example, I myself now receive [things] from the [local] Russians. One has to go on fighting. But later, Yeltsin will be writing that we are being helped by Turkey, by Islamic leaders, by some western, Christian [countries], that they all are helping us. [end recording]

[Konovalov] Brigadier General Shamil Basayev who, after the action in Budennovsk, became the number one terrorist for some and a hero for others, was frank with us on the subject of money allocated for the restoration of Chechnya.

[Begin Basayev recording] We also receive some of this [money]. We have to fight, after all. And if less is coming from Russia, or [word indistinct], then it goes without saying that anyone would want to live in Russia. [end recording]

[Konovalov] Basayev says already 100,000 Russian soldiers and 3,000 fighters have been killed in Chechnya. There is no talk about civilians. Of course, the first figure is likely to be vastly exaggerated. But those who have been in Chechnya do not believe the official figures either. It is understandable that each one is pulling the blanket to himself [sentence as heard]. But all agree on one thing: This war is about money. At least, men in the trenches and at the road blocks believe so.

Thus, this strange war continues. But, both Russian soldiers and Chechen guerrillas hope that the Russian troops will be pulled out from Chechnya before the elections. [video shows Chechen and Russian soldiers and military hardware]

Russia: Commander of 58th Army Interviewed

MM0403153796 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 2 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

[Interview with Lieutenant General Gennadiy Troshev, commander of the Russian 58th Army, by Colonel Anatoliy Borovkov and Lieutenant Colonel Nikolay Astashkin; place and date not given: "Will for Peace in Caucasus Will Prevail Over Supporters of War. Our Correspondents' Questions Answered by 58th Army Commander Lieutenant General Gennadiy Troshev"]

[FBIS Translated Text] From KRASNAYA ZVEZDA's file: Gennadiy Nikolayevich Troshev was born in 1947. He graduated from the Armored Troops Military Academy and the General Staff Military Academy. He commanded a tank regiment and a tank division. From 1991 he was first deputy commander of a tank army. He has been in command of the 58th Army since May 1995.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Gennadiy Nikolayevich, the 58th Army has a high public profile at the moment. This is certainly no accident. After all, the place where it is stationed can without exaggeration be described as the worst "trouble spot" in Russia. Could you briefly encapsulate the aims and tasks of the large strategic formation in your charge?

[Troshev] The 58th Army is a unique formation without parallel in the Russian Armed Forces at present. How does this find expression? First, the 58th Army includes a motorized infantry brigade stationed actually in Groznyy. The personnel of this combined unit serve in fortified checkpoints and outposts and guard the most important facilities. Second, some of the formation's forces and resources collaborate with the Russian Federation MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] internal troops in imposing constitutional order in the republic. These forces are periodically replaced, as you know....

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] It was presumably for this purpose that the motorized infantry battalion that came under fire from the Dudayev forces near the settlement of Arshty was traveling across Ingushetia's territory?

[Troshev] Of course. And the sheer paradox of the situation lies in the fact that the motorized infantrymen were on Russian soil! Furthermore, an itinerary avoiding population centers was deliberately chosen. The bandits made a surprise attack 1 km from the settlement of Galashki. A battle began which lasted two and a half hours. That was where our first soldier died. After repelling the attack, the battalion continued on its way. But after a few kilometers the convoy again came under very heavy fire from small arms, grenade launchers, and mortars. However, despite the fact that conditions for battle were extremely unfavorable and the weather too, unfortunately, was not on our side, the battalion resisted the bandits for two days on an inaccessible road high in the mountains. At that time neither aircraft nor artillery were able to help the motorized infantrymen. Our heavy losses are down to this alone.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] The central press has been paying notable attention to the events of recent days in Ingushetia. Furthermore, the sharply anti-Russian mindset of certain publications is openly provoking internal state conflict. [Ingush] President Aushev's position is also beneath criticism. There is no doubt: He is openly playing up to the nationalists....

[Troshev] My view is this. War in the fatherland is simply to the advantage of certain people. And Russian lads are paying for this fact with their blood and their lives. In order to gain a better understanding of what has been happening in and around the region recently and how, we must return to the events in Kizlyar and Pervomayskoye, in which I was a direct participant. In particular, I elaborated the combat operations plan for the Russian Federation Defense Ministry forces, and so I am entitled to express my anger at the implausible and sometimes frankly invented facts set out in certain mass media. For instance, in Valeriy Yakov's article "Who Benefits From the Story of a 'Corridor' for Raduyev?" (IZVESTIYA for 10 February 1996). First of all I must draw attention to the graphic featured on the front page of the newspaper. There are quite major inaccuracies in it. First, the reinforced motorized infantry battalion of a separate motorized infantry brigade comprising 730 men blockaded the village not only from the east, as shown in IZVESTIYA, but also from the northeast and southeast, and the two airborne division tactical groups comprising 80 men blockaded the village not from the north but from the west and southwest. Second, a 59-man tactical group from the 22d Special Purpose Brigade blockaded the village from the northwest in collaboration with a separate special-purpose company from the 58th Army, and an 80-man border detachment mobile group, which, incidentally is not mentioned at all, blockaded the village from the north in collaboration with a motorized infantry company. Those are only the first inaccuracies, to put it mildly, in the "truthful" piece by that "specialist" on the Chechen question V. Yakov.

All the aforementioned subunits constituted the forces ringing Pervomayskoye. These subunits were in a two-echelon battle formation, thus creating an inner ring and an outer ring. The third ring consisted of SOBR [Special Rapid Reaction Detachment] and OMON [Special Purpose Police Detachment] forces and "Vityaz" and "Alfa" subunits, which were carrying out their own special operation to destroy the terrorists. In addition, in order to prevent the gunmen from approaching from the likeliest directions in order to lift the blockade on Raduyev's gang, reinforced checkpoints manned by the local police and the Republic of Dagestan OMON were established on the approaches to Pervomayskoye and at the main road intersections, and an 88-man tactical group took up defensive positions on the territory of Chechnya and on the eastern outskirts of the village of Azamat-Yurt.

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] So how come the terrorists were nevertheless able to break out and get back home?

[Troshev] I will try to answer that question. What would you have done if you knew perfectly well that certain death awaited you in the population center and the only chance of surviving, albeit a slim chance, was to muster your strength for a final breakthrough and concentrate all your forces on a single spot? The mentality of a wounded beast was totally confirmed at Pervomayskoye. They had nothing to lose. The bandits took drugs to boost their morale and launched their breakout.... One hundred and sixty gunmen were killed as a result of the fighting, 30 were captured, and nobody knows how many "uncounted" bodies were swept away by the river. I repeat, only a small handful of Raduyev's men (we calculate 20 or 30 men) managed to escape. The dark night, the ramified network of irrigation canals and tall reeds, and the wooded terrain helped the bandits to avoid total destruction. Although, I repeat, not many escaped.

That is the whole story. Everything turned out the way it does during wartime, and there is no point in seeking some secret meaning where there was none and could not have been any. And the Defense Ministry forces performed their task to the uttermost. However, there were unexplained episodes during the operation. These arose as a result of the efforts of those who find it advantageous for the situation always to take a disadvantageous turn for the federal forces. In short, not everything was within our control....

[KRASNAYA ZVEZDA] Thank you for a rather detailed and militarily clear explanation of the situation. But there is one last question. The region where your army is stationed is indeed explosive. The Ossetian-Ingush conflict has not been totally resolved, Chechnya is a "headache," Abkhazia and its problems are not far away, and the Ter, Kuban, and Don Cossacks are uneasy.... This process cannot be stopped by weapons alone!

[Troshev] I take your point. In fact we have established or are establishing with all legitimate leaders of local organs of power entirely normal, businesslike relations aimed at peacefully stabilizing the situation in the region. The army's headquarters are in Vladikavkaz, so our closest relations are naturally with the North Ossetian leadership. There has been no problem — and problems constantly arise — on which we have not reached mutual agreement. The same thing is also emerging in Chechnya, where unit commanders are trying to establish contacts at local level. The process is under way, so to speak. I would like to believe that it will not be long before our "troubled" region at long last sees a day when the people of all nationalities inhabiting it begin to live in peace and friendship. This is my belief.

Russia: Rally Backing Chechen Independence Begins in Moscow

LD0303133096 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1300 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A meeting has just begun in Moscow on Pushkinskaya square in support of Chechnya's independence. This action is being held by a group of activists of the Right-96 [Pravo-96] movement.

CIS: Council Assembly Sees 'No Alternative' to Integration

LD0203135896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1240 GMT 2 Mar 96

[By Tamara Zamyatina, Nikolay Kalintsev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 2 (Itar-Tass) — "A reanimated state code-named the USSR cannot appear in the next few years since there is no body which ruled the former Soviet Union — the CPSU Central Committee," said Russian Minister for cooperation with the CIS countries Valeriy Serov during debates on a report devoted to the problem whether the revival of the former Soviet Union by the year 2005 was possible.

The minister's opinion was backed by the majority of participants in the Assembly of the Council for foreign and defence politics which is being held here. At the same time, there was no particular objection to the thesis that there is no alternative today to an integration process in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

During the debates deputy of the State Duma Sergey Shakhray confirmed the opinion that "all the processes of the disintegration of the former Soviet Union had been going on under the CPSU carpets." Quoting secret protocols from the CPSU "special file" Shakhray said that at one of the party's plenary sessions a question was raised on putting the resignation of the USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev on the agenda of a CPSU congress.

Besides, on April 26, 1990 the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a law on a change in the concept of the Soviet Union envisaging that the Soviet Union should consist of 35 subjects, rather than 15 republics, without the right to secede from it. Shakhray believes that it was communists, and in particular, the organizers of the Russian Communist Party — Ivan Polozkov and Gennadiy Zyuganov, who had stepped up the disintegration of the USSR.

Participants in the discussion expressed the opinion that the CIS would develop in the form of confederation on the pattern of the European Union. As for the Baltic states, members of the Council for foreign and defence politics regard these countries as "lost for integration", while Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia stand the best chances for their participation in integration processes.

CIS: Foreign, Defense Council Examines Russia-CIS Relations

LD0203190296 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1700 GMT 2 Mar 96

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council for Foreign and Defense Policy met at the poetically named Forest Vista Villa near Moscow today. The council is a nongovernmental organization but it is thought that its recommendations substantially influence public opinion and state policymakers alike.

The council numbers prominent politicians, entrepreneurs, media people, and scientists among its members. Today's meeting debated the possibility of resurrecting the Soviet Union. There is no doubt that it could not happen with its previous composition and size and there were no differences on this particular score.

Those present were fairly unanimous that there is no alternative to integration within the CIS framework.

[Begin recording] [Aleksey Arbatov, deputy chairman of the Russian State Duma's Defense Committee] Russia must, without fail, conduct an active policy in the former Soviet Union republics. This policy should be directed toward integration and also toward economic and political war, but only in those cases in which it is justified from the point of view of Russia's interests.

[Unidentified correspondent] Irina Khakamada (leader of the Common Cause party, former secretary general of the Economic Freedom Party) thinks that realistic mechanisms for effecting a union have not yet been thought through. She thinks that integration will simply entail having to experience another economic disaster.

[Sergey Karaganov, chairman of the collegium of the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy and member of the Presidential Council] As far as rapprochement is concerned, we must proceed cautiously when necessary and swiftly whenever we can. In particular, let us move as fast as we can where Belarus and Kazakhstan are concerned. This should be done literally during the next two to three months where Belarus is concerned.

However, we should wait awhile where Ukraine is concerned. The point is that currently the Ukrainian leaders, the country's leadership, are not ready as it were, for the kind of rapprochement which would look attractive to us.

[Correspondent] Karaganov thinks that the (Russian) president should postpone his visit to Ukraine.

[Karaganov] The visit can create more problems than it can solve.

[Correspondent] It was said today that the topic of the integration of the former Soviet Union republics would inevitably become one of the hottest election issues. [end recording]

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 2 Mar

LD0203075096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0559 GMT 2 Mar 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline; quotation marks as received throughout]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 2 (Itar-Tass) — IZVESTIYA carries a commentary wondering why hundreds of construction workers from the Stavropol region are willing to work in dangerous Chechnya. Having visited construction firms in the towns of Pyatigorsk, Yessentuki and Mineralnyye Vody one gets an impression that the sad fate of construction workers either taken hostage or killed by Chechen militants has not intimidated anyone. Employment departments seem to be unable to cope with a mass of volunteers willing to restore Chechen towns and villages.

"After we got a contract for construction in Groznyy last year, we took 40 more construction workers on staff," said a director of one of the Yessentuki construction companies. If we did not have a status of a minor enterprise, under which the number of the personnel should not exceed 200, we should have been a major company by now," the newspaper quoted the director as saying. Some workers have got jobs they have long been looking for thanks to the construction in Chechnya, while others improved their financial position.

KRASNAYA ZVEZDA says that in a few days President Boris Yeltsin will announce what option of the settlement of the Chechen conflict he has chosen out of many others suggested to him. Until now, the main option of the Chechen settlement was considered to be financial investments into the restoration of the Chechen economy and its social sector in the hope that a return to normal life will influence the political situation as well, thus step-by step eliminating the environment "nourishing" the armed conflict. However, "there is one thing against it, the newspaper says. No war has ever been waged without expenditures involved, which implies direct connection between the amount of funds spent by each of the warring sides: one who has more money has more victories to his credit. Therefore, it is clear that federal troops, which were obviously scarcely financed, but from the federal budget in a centralized way, managed to break the resistance offered by Dudayev's militants and by the end of last summer had driven Dudayev's scattered formations high up in the mountains. But then, a sudden and inexplicable "respite" began, during which Dudayev's formations which had suffered considerable losses regained their combat capacity, replenishing both their arsenals and manpower. Let us recollect one important thing which occurred in those summer days in 1995 when the militants demonstratively easily parted with all their old guns... Because simultaneously they were getting new ones which were in big supply. It is no secret that considerable funds were needed to get them. "One might think that a considerable part of funds to continue the war was and is being obtained from the allocations Russia had sent for the restoration of Chechnya practically since the very beginning of the conflict," KRASNAYA ZVEZDA said.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA carries an article entitled "A chatterbox is not a find for CIA only" which says that there is no doubt in the United States that agent Robert Lipka was exposed by Oleg Kalugin who had recently published his memoirs. Another scandal is expected to break out in Canada, but the former KGB general remains calm. However, a question arises which is not rhetorical at all — whether the one who had committed an act incompatible with a status of a Russian citizen will be brought to justice, the newspaper said.

IZVESTIYA carries a detailed commentary on its front page about the rescue of the sailor from a Russian submarine by the British Royal Navy. The newspaper pointed out the interaction between the sides and especially the position of the British naval marines who had come to the rescue of the Russian man although the Russian submarine had been carrying out a mission in the waters of the Northern sea near the Scottish coast which can hardly be called a friendly one.

ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA carries an article devoted to the commemoration of prominent Russian TV journalist Vladislav Listyev who was murdered a year ago. "Although a year has passed since his death, the pain caused by the loss does not subside," the newspaper said. "Vlad Listyev was a born journalist. He was a symbol of any TV programme which he created. After he was gone, his favorite creations such as the "Theme" and the "Rush Hour" programmes have become difficult to accept, the newspaper said.

IZVESTIYA quoted Director of the US FBI department who highly praised a joint investigation carried out by FBI agents and officers of the Russian Interior Department, describing it as an unprecedented success and a vivid example of new cooperation. The investigation, which had been going on for 2.5 years, ended in criminal charges brought against four New York residents. Three of them have been arrested and the fourth one is still at large.Two of the men in question, former Soviet citizens Lev Bleskin and Aleksandr Korogodskiy are now US citizens, while Yakov Portnoy and Georgiy Iosipyan are Russian citizens permanently residing in the US. The four criminals have appropriated by fraud 10.2 million dollars from 24 Russian companies.

Russia: Primakov, Norway's Godal Discuss Yeltsin Visit

LD0203155596 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1500 GMT 2 Mar 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The visit to Norway by Russian President Boris Yeltsin between 20-30 March was one of the main issues discussed in Moscow today at a meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers.

[Begin recording Yevgeniy Primakov, foreign minister] Both the Russian and Norwegian foreign ministries believe this visit could be a very important one and could give a new boost to the development of our bilateral relations... [end recording]

[Correspondent Andrey Sturua] ...said Yevgeniy Primakov, head of the Russian foreign political department, at a news conference. His Norwegian counterpart Bjorn Tore Godal expressed complete agreement with this view.

As the ministers said, a broad range of issues of the development of bilateral relations as well as international problems linked with European security was discussed during the course of the talks. Most attention was focused on the subject of the former Yugoslavia. Yevgeniy Primakov said that a contact group at foreign minister level had been invited to Moscow between 20-30 March, together with an invitation to the three heads of the foreign political departments from the former Yugoslavia. On the agenda are a discussion of questions on the implementation of agreements on civil matters. It was noted that despite differences in views on NATO's expansion, normal relations are developing between Russia and this organization, on the one hand, and with Norway, on the other.

Russia: Commentary on Yeltsin's Worry Over NATO War Game

MK0103145296 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 2

[Commentary by Vladimir Abarinov: "Boris Yeltsin Perturbed by NATO Maneuvers in Norway"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Oslo is puzzled by Russian Presidential Press Secretary Sergey Medvedev's announcement that Boris Yeltsin "is following with anxiety developments near Russia on the territory of Norway." Mr. Medvedev explained that he was speaking of the military exercises which, in the Kremlin's opinion, "do not serve understanding and dialogue with Russia."

The "Battle Griffin '96" NATO maneuvers will go ahead on 7 March. Taking part in them will be subunits of three branches of the services of the United States, Norway, Denmark, Germany, and Belgium. In the words of a [Norwegian] Royal Ministry of Defense spokesman, coordination of NATO forces in a situation of "military crisis" and under difficult climatic and geographical conditions will be practiced in the course of the exercises. The total number of forces involved will be 15,000 people. "These maneuvers are not directed against Russia, and not a provocation against Russia," an ITAR-TASS correspondent was told in the headquarters of the joint command of the North of Norway.

It is not the first time that President Yeltsin has been worried ov[illegible]velopments" near the Norwegian border — inci[illegible] this is one of the quiet borders for Russia. Wh[illegible]Lipetsk last January, he became worried to such [illegible]e that, for the first time ever, he unpacked his nuc[illegible]uitcase and ordered the downing of a Norwegian meteorological rocket.

It is these sort of excesses that make the Norwegians strengthen their defenses. While there is no mention of Russia as a probable adversary in official documents, they invariably note the unpredictability of its internal political processes. The problem of delimitation of the Barents Sea shelf should be added to this while [noting that] the mission of the Royal Armed Forces does not consist solely in repulsing aggression, but also in protecting the country's economic interests, including the mineral and fish resources of its 200-mile economic zone. Norway's military doctrine in this regard provides for the worst variants: Last year, for example, big — at least according to Norwegian standards — exercises were held there [code-named] "Strong Resolve '95." The country's territory was divided into two conventional states: a prosperous and democratic Greenland, and a poor and authoritarian Whiteland. The scenario was that Whiteland was laying claims to mineral deposits and fisheries in Greenland's waters. Pressing for an agreement beneficial for itself, Whiteland stages maneuvers off the shores of peaceable Greenland. The UN Security Council passes a resolution condemning these actions, brings in sanctions against the aggressor, and asks the NATO Council to guarantee Greenland's security. NATO responds with consent.

Russia: Primakov Says NATO Maneuvers 'Not a Serious Irritant'

LD0203174596 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 2 Mar 96

[From the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Norwegian foreign minister is in Moscow. A few delicate subjects cropped up at the talks.

[Correspondent, over video of arrival and news conference] Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjorn Tore Godal knew one word of Russian - "no". With the aid of an interpreter, he managed to give an explanation of the military exercises in Norway. The Russian minister said he found these explanations satisfactory.

The Kremlin expressed concern the other day over the NATO military maneuvers being held in north Norway, stating that these maneuvers do not serve to promote mutual understanding between Moscow and the NATO countries. Just before he came to Moscow, Goadal described the holding of such maneuvers as quite normal, and said he did not understand Russia's anxiety. Today the Norwegian minister tried to persuade Yevgeniy Primakov that Moscow has no grounds for concern.

[Begin Primakov recording] We are not making a drama out of the holding of military maneuvers in Norway. But at the same time we noted them because they are the first maneuvers which Norway has held since it lifted the limitations it imposed upon itself in the military sphere. And whereas previously military representatives of other states did not take part in such maneuvers, they are now participating in them. But I would like to say once again that this is not a serious irritant in our relations. [end recording]

[Correspondent] Boris Yeltsin's forthcoming visit trip to Norway was also discussed at the meeting between the two ministers. The visit has been postponed several times, including because of the president's illness.

At a joint news conference today, Yevgeniy Primakov announced that Boris Yeltsin's visit to Norway would take place between 20 and 30 March.

Russia: Primakov: Moscow Will Defend Interests Against NATO

MK0103130796 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Vladimir Katin, RIA NOVOSTI NATO correspondent: "Primakov on Russia and NATO. He Has Called for National Interests To Be Protected Without Slipping Into Confrontation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, in Strasbourg on the occasion of the Russian Federation's official entry into the Council of Europe, responded to a question about Moscow's approach to NATO's eastward expansion: "Russia, maybe even more than before, is interested in protecting its national interests. But the dialectics of politics is that protection of these interests should not lead to slipping into confrontation. Russia will do everything to prevent such slippage and to defend its interests in a civilized way.... Plans for NATO expansion, however, create a sharply deteriorating situation for us in all respects: political, psychological, military, and geopolitical. Sometimes we are told that NATO is not targeted against Russia and that therefore we can easily accept its eastward expansion. This is no argument. Let us look at the things objectively and realistically. Recently, for instance, U.S. President Bill Clinton said that former Soviet missiles currently located in Russia are not targeted at the West and that this is one of the greatest achievements of the past few years. This is really so. I do not think, however, that the West would, in these conditions, applaud an increase in the number of our missiles, even if not targeted at it. Why then does the West want us to applaud NATO expansion even if this military alliance is not targeted at Russia? I would like to stress this: When we talk about NATO expansion, this does not necessarily mean that we are imposing some sort of veto or banging our fist on the table, trying to prevent East European countries from joining the North Atlantic Alliance. No, this is not so. Because every country has its own national interests, allow Russia also to have such interests, allow it to defend its interests if it considers that they are threatened by NATO expansion."

Russia: Primakov: Cooperation With NATO Depends On Non-Expansion

LD0203174596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1727 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 2 (Interfax) - Russia will seek the continuation and development of cooperation with NATO but on condition that NATO does not enlarge, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov told reporters in Moscow Saturday after talks with Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjorn Tore Godal.

There are good examples regarding cooperation between Russia and NATO, Primakov said. "But they in no way cross out our negative attitude towards the alliance's enlargement," he said.

Primakov said that during his talks with the Norwegian foreign minister the parties agreed that no new separation lines should be accepted in Europe despite some differences regarding the two countries' approaches to NATO enlargement. Russia believes that NATO enlargement will inevitably lead to the appearance of such separation lines, Primakov said.

Regarding the incident concerning Russian resident Aleksandr Nikitin, an employee of the Bellona environmental organization, who was arrested by Russian special services and charged with spying, Primakov said the Russian authorities had nothing to reproach the Bellona for. Nikitin is accused of violating Russian legislation, Primakov said.

With regard to the NATO military exercise in northern Norway, Primakov said this problem did not seriously "irritate" bilateral relations. Primakov said he had exchanged opinions on the issue with his Norwegian counterpart and was satisfied with the explanations provided by Bjorn Tore Godal.

Relations between Russia and Norway develop normally, Primakov said, adding that there are no unsurmountable barriers relating to Russian-Norwegian relations.

Primakov said he had accepted the invitation of his Norwegian counterpart to visit Oslo.

Russia: Foreign Ministry Condemns Latest Terrorist Act in Jerusalem

LD0303162596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1542 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 3 (Itar-Tass) — The Russian foreign ministry has decisively condemned the latest terrorist act committed in Jerusalem today, where as a result of a bomb blast in a bus about 20 people were killed this morning.

"We resolutely condemn this criminal, senseless act of extremism, which is against the basic interests of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and hampers progress of the region towards peace and once again push it into an abyss of sufferings and blood", the foreign ministry statement received by Itar-Tass said.

The document expressed the hope that "pain and emotions of this attack by terrorists will not shake the firm resolution of the participants in the Palestinian-Israeli settlement to follow the only one reliable road, that is to continue the dialogue and search mutual accords on comprehensive peace, stability and truly good-neighbour-like relationship in this long-suffering region".

The document expressed sympathy with the victims and heartfelt condolences to families and near and dear ones of those killed as a result of this act of terrorism.

Russia: Gromov Says No Nuclear Missiles on Submarine Off Scotland

LD0103213096 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 1 Mar 96

[Report by Yevgeniy Revenko and Vyacheslav Voronov; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Russian naval seaman Aleksandr Yerokhin was airlifted from a Russian multipurpose submarine and taken to hospital in Stornoway, the administrative center of the Hebrides, west of Scotland, yesterday evening. [passage omitted]

"At a meeting with naval attaches at the Russian Navy Main Staff in Moscow, Commander in Chief Feliks Gromov thanked British attache C.A.M. Parrish for the assistance rendered. The British naval captain reported on the situation." [passage omitted]

In an interview to our television company, Gromov declared there was nothing unusual in the fact that the Russian submarine was close to the British shores.

[Begin recording] [Gromov] It was a multipurpose submarine that was carrying out an ordinary voyage, as is done for crew training [dlya otrabotki ekipazha].

[Unidentified correspondent] Are there any nuclear missiles on board?

[Gromov] No. [end recording]

Russia: Approval for Ministry's Work on Cooperation With U.S.

MM0403114296 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 2 Mar 96 p 5

[Russian Federation Government directive No. 255, signed by Premier V. Chernomyrdin and dated 26 February 1996]

[FBIS Translated Text] With a view to implementing the accords reached with the U.S. side at the sixth session of the Russian-U.S. Commission for Economic and Technological Cooperation:

1. The activity of the Russian Ministry of Science and Technology Policy in elaborating a mechanism for cooperation with the U.S. foundation for the support of civil research and development and in ensuring the Russian side's participation in the selection of joint projects is hereby approved.

2. The Russian Ministry of Science and Technology Policy shall be authorized to implement, under the agreement with the U.S. foundation for the support of civil research and development, joint projects out of the federal budget funds allocated by the Russian Ministry of Science and Technology Policy for the development of promising technologies and priority avenues of scientific and technical progress.

[Signed] V. Chernomyrdin, chairman of the Russian Federation Government
[Dated] Moscow, 26 February 1996
No. 255

Russia: Commentary Decries Castro Actions, Backs U.S. Sanctions

MK0203145396 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 2 Mar 96 p 4

[Commentary by Leonid Velekhov: "To the Benefactors of the Cuban People"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, Saturday, a week after two U.S. light civilian aircraft were shot down by the Cuban Air Force for flying over Fidel Castro's territorial waters, Cuban emigres in Miami are holding a protest in Caribbean neutral waters, near the place where the aircraft came down. We shall have to see whether Castro, who protects his waters so jealously, will dare attack civilian boats of an expedition which, on Clinton's orders, will be covered by U.S. aviation. I bet that he won't, even if the protesters cross the neutral water or air boundary.

What is surprising, however, is not the behavior by Castro, who has long and forever placed himself outside the norms of political and human ethics and who has often stated that norms of international law are no law unto him. It is the reaction by the world community — at best sluggish and pseudo-objective and at worst so inappropriate as to suggest that some politicians and diplomats have drawn their information about the incident from only two sources — the Cuban official paper GRANMA and the Cuban news agency PRENSA LATINA. It is understandable when such an inadequate reaction comes from the Latin American world. The anti-American syndrome typical of it, plus Independencia-style defiance, will explain everything. Yet here is Mr. Ambartsumov, a prominent diplomat and the Russian Federation's ambassador to Mexico, describing the events as a "new U.S. onslaught on Cuba" and as "blackmail," calling on all countries "to come out in protest against a new spiral in U.S. aggression." This is how, without a second's hesitation, people who made a grab for power on the crest of the wave of anti-Communist rhetoric and who revised their political vocabulary as soon as the establishment gave them a cushy job, mix cause and effect and begin to talk in the false diction of PRAVDA.

Castro shot down two civilian aircraft; four men were killed; the 1949 Chicago Convention, banning the use of weapons against civilian aircraft even if they are in foreign airspace, which was signed by, among others, Cuba's representative, has been violated. In response, Clinton applied sanctions — incidentally, not as tough as the Republicans wanted them to be, and which do not in any substantial way affect the Cuban economy. The sanctions mainly affect U.S. and foreign rogue businessmen who like to fish in troubled waters and buy, at knockdown prices, real estate in Cuba that was illegally nationalized by Castro after the 1959 revolution.

It is said concerning Castro's action: It needs to be investigated and straightened out (that is to say, hushed up). Concerning Clinton's reaction, a verdict is passed instantly: "blackmail" and "another spiral." There is apocalyptic wailing to the effect that after the new sanctions the Cuban people will have nothing to eat. One would think they received very much from the illegal sale of foreign property effected by Castro and his inner circle. When will the Castro propaganda myth that the Cuban people owe their deplorable situation to the U.S. embargo be dispelled? Neither the old embargo, effectively breached, nor the new sanctions will be able to affect the situation in any significant way. Castro, through his ill-advised policy, continuous experiments, and his ingrained reliance on outside help, has brought the country's economy to such a state that it simply has nothing to trade with the rest of the world and nothing with which to buy anything from this world. He himself has isolated the country from the world, first reducing its economic foundation, agriculture, to a sugar cane monoculture, and then reducing the output of this monoculture to such a dismal level that there is no way it can feed the island.

Castro has ruined the country and left its people to their own devices, engaging in subsistence economics and waiting for assistance from relatives in Miami. Yet, apart from Castro himself, some people outside Cuba still stand to gain from upholding the lie that Cuba lives in a constant struggle against U.S. imperialism and survives in defiance of the U.S. embargo. The Cuban people, in fact, live and survive in defiance of Castro: It is high time this truth was understood by those of his legitimizers who today condemn Washington's sanctions against Castro. That is, of course, if they are really his supporters, not political demagogues who change their orientation with the speed of a weather vane.

The downing of civilian aircraft on 24 February was Castro's payment to Clinton for his indecisiveness and vacillation over the "Cuban question" and his constantly demonstrated readiness for a dialogue with Havana. He has shown a lack of interest in any dialogue. Dictatorship needs isolation; this is its natural element, in which its own people can be fooled and which can be used to cover its own impotence.

Washington's response has been quite equal to the situation, although, as one very good playwright has said, a little soft.

Russia: U.S. Reluctant To Act Against Anti-Castro Cubans

MM0103162896 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Vadim Markushin: "The Intransigents Cannot Be Stopped by Fines. Washington Gives Green Light to New Provocations by Tolerating 'Its Own' Cubans"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The incident on the Cuban coast as a result of which two light aircraft belonging to the Brothers to the Rescue Cuban community organization in Miami were shot down last Saturday [24 February] is apparently considered closed. The Americans announced new sanctions against Havana, adding the colorful term "retribution" to them. The UN Security Council has adopted a resolution of condemnation and regret. Latin American countries have confined themselves to extremely restrained statements "keeping a foot in both camps" in which it is not hard to discern an unwillingness to incur Washington's displeasure.

Cuba's readiness for an "impartial" investigation into the incident, which its official spokesmen continue to state, does not seem to be making any significant impression on the U.S. authorities. They are still extremely unequivocal in their attitude toward the incident: Since unarmed civilian aircraft were fired on and moreover, it is claimed, in neutral airspace, those who used force must be punished. The Cuban side's insistent calls that account be taken of its legitimate right to protect its sovereignty are not being given proper attention either.

However, the Cuban Foreign Ministry statement stresses, it is precisely these aspects of the conflict on which Havana is trying to focus the international community's attention. The most important thing for Havana is to eliminate the preconditions for provocations on the part of Florida's implacable Cuban immigrant community. During the investigation, the Cuban Foreign Ministry stated, account must be taken of all "previous cases of and circumstances surrounding blatant provocations" involving violations of the island's airspace, as well as the risk which they posed to the safety of international flights and to Cuba itself.

Answering criticisms regarding the fact that the Cuban MiG-29's shot down civilian aircraft, the Cuban Foreign Ministry stressed that it was these airplanes that were used to drop explosives and incendiaries on the country's economic facilities and sugar plantations and which carried out acts of "biological warfare."

A press release issued by the Cuban Embassy in Moscow on the occasion of the latest incident listed all the cases in which Cuban airspace was violated in 1994-1995 — with a precise indication of geographical coordinates, times, and the numbers of the relevant diplomatic notes to the United States. In connection with the violations listed, the document says, the Cuban authorities were forced to resort to the temporary closure of the Giron international civil aviation corridor and to introduce restrictions on arrivals and departures at Varadero Airport. The repeated cases of overflying the island, the press release stresses, carry the risk of major disasters, because the "Brothers'" aircraft were flying under "dangerous zones set aside for military exercises."

Throughout this entire episode what is maybe the hardest thing to explain is why the "Brothers" did not stop their flights despite systematic warnings from the Cuban side. Juan Roke [surname as transliterated], a former Cuban Air Force pilot who has spent a whole four years living in Miami as a "protected defector," claims that the Brothers to the Rescue organization has carried out determined work to provoke incidents between the United States and Cuba. "This is needed by the American Right," he stated.

Naturally, the question of the degree of the Miami "Brothers'" future activeness along the Cuban coast remains open. Because by punishing the Castro regime with sanctions Washington is essentially letting the organizers of the provocative flights off scot-free. White House administration spokesmen are saying some unconvincing things on this subject. They say that it is too difficult to monitor the situation regarding these deliberate violations. As regards the Federal Aviation Authority, this civilian department is preparing to take only punitive measures (in the form of fines and the revocation of aircraft operators' licenses) that are unlikely to cool the ardor of the intransigent "Brothers."

Russia: Commentary Views U.S. 'Anti-Cuban Hysterical Campaign'

LD0303143096 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in English 1210 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Last Saturday [24 February]] the Cuban Air Force shot down two American light planes over its airspace. The planes belonged to an organization known as Brothers to the Rescue with headquarters in Miami. Yuriy Sultan, a political commentator examines the serious incident and this is what he writes:

The UN Security Council has asked the International Civil Aviation Organization, the ICAO, to investigate the incident and will meet on March 6 to delve into it. The ICAO is expected to answer the one important question of whether the incident happened in open space, as claimed by Washington, or that the planes consciously violated Cuban airspace as Cuba insists. Its seem that while waiting for the result of the investigation it would be necessary to refrain from mutual accusations not to mention direct threats. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. U.S. President Bill Clinton has hurriedly announced a new toughening of the long standing trade and economic blockade of Cuba and the U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeline Albright has diclosed that Washington reserves the right to take further unilateral or multilateral measures against Cuba. Several observers explained such a tough reaction by the U.S. administration by the [word indistinct] Mr. Clinton who has been accused of indecisiveness and softness by his Republican opponents to score political points in advance of the U.S. presidential race. By showing that he is after all a tough guy. For its part, Havana has accused the U.S. of aggression and demanded an emergency session of the UN General Assembly to consider the unfolding situation. Of course everybody condemns the use of force against civilian planes, but on the other hand, it is unacceptable for civilian ships or aircraft to be consciously used for provocative violations of borders of any given country. In the past 20 months sea vessels and aircraft belonging to anti-Castro organizations based in Florida have on several occasions either with the connivance of [word indistinct] support of Washington grossly violated Cuban borders. Brothers to the Rescue Organization has vowed to send its two remaining aircraft back into Cuban airspace soon. It will be interesting to see whether Washington will act to prevent such a naked provocation.

It should perhaps be mentioned that the anti-Cuban hysterical campaign being worked up by Washington has so far found little international support. Canada has already announced it will continue to trade and maintain other economic ties with Cuba and several Latin American countries are rather lukewarm to the new U.S. sanctions against Cuba. Members of the European Union will continue to talk to Cuba about developing economic ties, but the EU have called on Cuba to implement political reforms which will exclude such a recent incident when the Cuban police arrested a group of dissidents preparing to hold a meeting in Havana. [passage omitted]

Russia: U.S. Threat to Russian Poultry Farming

MM0403115296 Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 2 Mar 96 p 1

["Pertinent Comments" by livestock expert Marat Glinka: "Chicken War To Follow Cold War?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Over the last three years U.S. poultry exports to our country have increased sixfold from $81 million to $500 million.. That is according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture official figures. But, according to unofficial figures — provided by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow — the figure is double that: A considerable proportion of U.S. poultry meat reaches us via East Europe evading high customs duties.

It would be all very well if our partners had the noble aim of supplying Russians with high-quality produce. But the facts show that they have quite a different aim: To destroy Russian broiler farming, which rapidly gained momentum and came close to completely saturating the Russian market with poussins [myasnyye tsyplyata] and threatened to present foreign firms with a major rival. As for quality, 26 percent of the imported poultry inspected by Russia's sanitary and epidemiological supervision service proved substandard.

And it would be fine were it a question of honest competition between Russian and U.S. poultry farmers. It was no coincidence that chicken drumsticks were dubbed "Bush's legs" — it was George Bush who provided U.S. export companies with government guarantees and the state subsidizes two-thirds of their costs. This sparked off not normal trade but true chicken expansion. According to press reports, the Americans cleared out their freezers, which were full to bursting of "brown" poultry for which there was no demand, and immediately expanded their poultry industry, as poultry enterprises have long been called in their country. According to experts, major U.S. poultry producers, who are keenly conquering the Russian market, have an interest in destroying the Russian Federation Administration for the Poultry Industry. "Mega-cheap" poultry marked "Made in America" has virtually completely displaced our poussins. As a result of the combined efforts of U.S. exporters and Russian reformers the national broiler industry, which has always yielded a steady profit, is being successfully destroyed.

Then suddenly.... "Russians' actions have undermined the U.S. poultry industry," U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman said worriedly. Panic broke out on the U.S. exchange: Brokers are afraid of a "full-scale trade war." What happened? Nothing in particular. In January Russian veterinary surgeons inspected (this is common practice) around 360 U.S. poultry farms, 50 poultry slaughter houses, and 30 refrigeration combines and found gross violations of our veterinary requirements. Conditions in which poultry is kept and fed and produce stored do not meet veterinary certificate standards. There are no guarantees of poultry health in terms of particularly contagious diseases, there is no diagnosis of salmonella or veterinary-sanitary checks even after slaughter, poultry is not checked for residual pesticides, heavy metal salts, hormones, and antibiotics, and regulation temperatures are not observed during poultry storage and shipment.

This did not alarm U.S. poultry producers at first. Only the management of the Cold Storage Association [Assotsiatsiya kholodilnikov], which includes 96 percent of enterprises in the sector in the United States, gave assurances that they would immediately meet all the Russian side's requirements. The well known journalist Melor Sturua reported from America that farmers had no particular misgivings about the inspections "since too much money is at stake." "Our companies are raking in money with both hands," Sturua cited Tobi Mura [name as transliterated], a representative of the U.S. Council for Exports of Domestic Poultry and Eggs, "and they are constantly telephoning us from Russia."

Shipments of substandard produce continued; "KomAgra" alone shipped 1,800 tonnes of chicken drumsticks, whose quality was deemed unsatisfactory on inspection. There is a threat of infectious poultry diseases being transmitted to Russia. Patience ran out: A few days ago the Russian Ministry of Agriculture and Food Department of Veterinary Science decided not to issue new licenses for poultry imports from the United States. Imports will continue under the previous licenses until 16 March. But if the U.S. side fails to provide guarantees by that date that it will meet veterinary certificate requirements, in particular insofar as the bacteriological and chemical soundness of the produce is concerned, there will be a complete ban on poultry imports from the United States.

You would have thought that everything was clear — restore order at your poultry farms and trade in peace. But this means additional expenditure! The "free market" has always had a pathological response to that. So U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman wrote to Russian Vice Premier Aleksandr Zaveryukha: "We totally disagree with the results of the inspection." And threatened: The new regulations "are excessive and do not help make produce safer."

Political levers are also added to the monetary stakes. "Low prices and the huge quantity of imported poultry," the U.S. Embassy in Moscow said in alarm, "may reinforce the antitrade stance of the Communists and Agrarians ahead of the June 1996 presidential elections." And Melor Sturua explained that cockfights between U.S. and Russian chickens "threaten to deepen the split in Russian society." According to him, the urban population is hypnotized by the quality and cheapness of U.S. chickens while the mayors of Russia's big cities are generally "powerful friends" of U.S. poultry exporters and the "democracy of these mayors is largely dictated by 'Bush's legs.'"

Is there any need to comment?

Russia: Russian-European Space Crew Pleased With Mission Results

LD0203184896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1818 GMT 2 Mar 96

[By Veronika Romanenkova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ZVYOZDNY GORODOK, March 2 (Itar-Tass) — Russian and European astronauts who returned to Earth on Thursday after a 180-day mission aboard the orbiting station Mir described their flight as a "real test for work on board a future international space station."

During the flight, which began in early September 1995 and was later extended for another 45 days, the crew — Yuriy Gidzenko and Sergey Avdeyev of Russia and Thomas Reiter of the European Space Agency — conducted dozens of experiments, took free-space walks and docked with the American space shuttle Atlantis and two cargo space ships.

Reiter was the first European Space Agency astronaut to go on such a long space mission.

Crew commander Gidzenko said he was pleased with the results of the flight and pointed that "when we had technical problems we tried to solve them on our own, without Earth's help."

He said that the crew worked as one coherent team which ensured the success of the mission. "We considered Thomas as one of us and sometimes we even forgot that he was not Russian," Avdeyev echoed his commander.

Political Issues

Russia: Yeltsin Dismisses More Human Rights Commission Members

LD0203215796 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 2 Mar 96

[Video report by unidentified correspondent; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] More reshuffles in the presidential apparatus here in Moscow: some more of the democrats' representatives are leaving their posts.

[Correspondent] [video shows corridors, presidential administration buildings, interview] Boris Yeltsin's press service announced today that the president had signed an edict removing Mikhail Arutyunov, Vyacheslav Bakhmin, Mikhail Molostvov, and Sergey Sirotkin from the Human Rights Commission. The human rights defenders submitted their resignation back on 20 January, after Sergey Kovalev left as head of the commission. Their request was only granted today. There are now officially three men on the commission: Former Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, writer Fazil Iskander, and Aleksandr Kopylov, head of the commission staff. Only the last will evidently be working on it, though. [video shows photograph of Yeltsin on the tank outside the White House] Boris Yeltsin's former supporters are leaving him. This photograph was taken in August 1991: Mikhail Arutyunov is there alongside Yeltsin on the tank. Now, however, Arutyunov no longer wants to be a democratic screen.

[Begin Arutyunov recording] The way the commission was made up, there was no normal cooperation between us and the president. The president in effect accepted none of the major proposals put forward by the commission. [end recording]

[Correspondent] According to Mikhail Arutyunov's information, the new make-up of the commission will be announced in the very near future. [passage omitted]

Russia: Yeltsin Inspects Presidential Situations Analysis Center

LD0103110896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1049 GMT 1 Mar 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 1 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin inspected today morning the Presidential Situations Analysis Centre, which is to be commissioned shortly in his Kremlin residence. Correspondents of Russian news services were told by Presidential Press Secretary Sergey Medvedev that the main purpose of the new Centre was to furnish urgent prioritied information to the Head of State on the situation in the country and throughout the world. The President and the services of his Aides will be able to use the Centre for analysing the most important problems and making urgent decisions.

The Press Secretary said that the Centre consisted of a unique local network connected to external sources of information. It is able to model situations and work out managerial decisions. For instance, one of its functions is to monitor the external political, socio-political, socio-economic, and natural-ecological situations in Russia and throughout the world. One of the main tasks of the Centre is to promptly inform the Head of State on current tendencies linked with the development of these most important processes. The Centre will analyse and assess the development of various situations, will elaborate versions of priority decisions, and will also be responsible for transmitting these decisions to their executors.

The President, Medvedev noted, had familiarised himself with the work of the Situations Centre on a very concrete example: the problem of paying wages. In a matter of a few split seconds he was furnished with a summarised schedule of wage payments made throughout the country and informed about the "most painful spots" existing, for instance, in Orel Region. Yeltsin immediately contacted from the Situations Centre the Head of the Orel Regional Administration, Speaker of the Federation Council Yegor Stroyev and discussed with him the existing situation. He also mapped out concrete versions of corresponding decisions.

At present, Medvedev said, the Centre is practically ready to be commissioned, but it will be fully put into operation in mid-March.

Representatives of the most diverse agencies and organisations will work at the Centre. Practically every ministry and department of the Russian Federation will be connected to the Centre and will be able both to get information from it and to feed its own data into it.

Russia: Zyuganov, Chernyshev View Yeltsin Message

MM0103110696 Moscow PRAVDA-5 in Russian 1-8 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Olga Koroleva: "Either Believe It or Check It...."]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Recently to all appearances the president's popularity rating has begun to increase. Obviously on the advice of his image makers Boris Nikolayevich has taken on the image of the kindly "father czar" long beloved of the people. The president has been playing his new role for just two weeks — since 15 February: He is generously issuing promises and strictly punishing the errant "aristocrats" and to what effect!

Many people believed that as of March they would receive their back wages, pensions, and allowances and then even their savings, devalued by inflation. Thanks to the president's message to the Federal Assembly deputies, broadcast on television, they recalled that it is he and no other who is Russia's "savior" and the guarantor of stability.

It looks as though the president will soon win the people's love again in the role of the people's defender. Unless, of course, his words prove to be a myth again. But where is the guarantee that this will not happen? The majority of deputies do not doubt that the fine "fairy tales" are not destined to become reality.

Gennadiy Zyuganov, chairman of the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] Duma faction

The president's new annual message to the Federal Assembly deputies contains no clear description of what is happening, no economic indicators, no concept for the country's further development. The message has an even more ritual nature than Yeltsin's speech in Yekaterinburg which was so publicized in the press. It is distinguished by a special populism and the lack of logic: The president approves the budget for this year submitted by the government and immediately curses the cabinet for holding back wages to state employees and miners. His criticism of members of government reminds me of the slogans of the opposition. As a whole you form the impression that the text of the message was copied from two-year-old CPRF documents.

The most surprising thing is that Yeltsin accuses everyone except himself of errors and failures as though it were not he who is responsible for his government's activity. In the past he "betrayed" the party to which he belonged for the sake of power, destroyed the state for the sake of the president's seat, and later betrayed the democrats and is now threatening to replace the cabinet. But what will that do if the president to all appearances has no plan for leading the country out of the crisis and has no reply to two very topical questions: How to swell the budget and restore production and how to restore peace in Chechnya? Yeltsin now has neither his own program nor a reliable, strong team. Without that he will be unable to achieve success.

Yeltsin has suggested to his competitors in the presidential elections that they conclude a pact of nonaggression yet he himself is constantly speaking about the hostility between the "whites" and the "reds" and the "democrats" and "conservatives." We do not intend to attack anyone, we are merely describing the real state of affairs.

Aleksey Chernyshev, chairman of the Committee for Agrarian Questions

I was surprised that in his message the president did not give the reasons for failing to fulfill the tasks outlined in last year's document. He tried to analyze the results of the country's development over the past four years but came to what in my view is an utterly incorrect conclusion: The reforms begun in 1992 have saved Russia from collapse and destruction.

Although Yeltsin assessed critically the situation in the agro-industrial complex and rightly noted the overall decline in production in the agrarian sector, for some reason he blamed this on former Agriculture Minister Nazarchuk, who held the post for just one year. Is he really to blame for everything?

The president failed to mention the important problem that is the country's food security. Last year over 40 percent of food was imported from abroad to the value of $13.3 billion (we earned almost the same sum from the sale of oil). By world standards food imports should not exceed 20 percent. So we must adopt as soon as possible the law "on the country's food security." And in general a state program for the regulation of the agro-industrial complex such as exists in many civilized countries is essential. The president vetoed the draft law "on the state regulation of agro-industrial production" adopted by the previous Duma. Obviously he is afraid that this law will undermine the entire market economy. That fear is misplaced.

Boris Nikolayevich complained that to this day there is no land code and private ownership of the land has not been introduced. But he is wrong to believe that private ownership of the land means salvation. The alteration of the form of ownership does not automatically produce a positive effect still less the transformation of land into a commodity. On the contrary, I am convinced that agricultural land can be leased or transferred to the country's citizens for payment to be theirs for life with the right to bequeath it without the right to sell it. Land for "civilian use" — small plots for kitchen gardens, gardens, houses, and garages — is another matter. This land can be sold but again only to citizens of the Russian Federation.

On 15 February in his speech the president promised a lot but it will be hard for him to keep his word. There is enough money in the budget only for the wages of state employees, there is not enough to support other sectors.

In the agrarian sector there is the lowest level of wages — an average of 228,000 rubles — and moreover payment is constantly being held back there. On some farms of Altay Kray, for instance, they have not issued money since October last year. But Yeltsin's promises do not extend to them: The wages were not held back by the state but by specific enterprises and commercial firms. But the government is also to blame: It failed to ensure the fulfillment of the law adopted in October 1994 "on purchases and deliveries of agricultural output for state needs." According to this law those who conclude contracts with agricultural workers should give them an advance of 25 percent of the cost of the goods, but they have often failed to do this and have left the farms without finances. The authorities have not considered it necessary to intervene. [passage omitted]

Russia: Chernomyrdin Explains Economic Reforms

LD0203121996 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1812 GMT 1 Mar 96

[Address by Russian Prime Minister Viktor Stepanovich Chernomyrdin, "in an interview with major Russian news agencies and radio companies" in Moscow on 1 March — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: First of all I would like to say that we will continue our regular meetings on the air. The government will advise you of the situation in the economy and social sphere, and of measures and decisions we take, so that Russian citizens can feel some improvement in their everyday lives. That was the subject of discussion at the government session chaired by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Thursday [29 February].

The current economic situation is mixed; it gives us grounds for restraint, hope, and confidence, but at the same time contains the roots of fatigue, disappointment, and discontent. Therefore, the discussion was tough and to the point. Many heads of ministries and departments, especially those responsible for budget revenues, were sharply criticized by the president and also, of course, by the chairman of the government.

We have once again looked carefully at the results of 1995. There has been considerable progress, but there have also been failures. The bottom line is that the economy is becoming fundamentally different. The rate of price rises has slowed down considerably.

Incidentally, speaking about February's inflation at the government sitting, I was overcautious. I said it would be about 3 percent. According to updated information we have received, one can say with confidence that February's inflation rate has reached 2.8 percent. This is the lowest figure we have ever had in the reform years. This is very important for us because it proves that we have chosen the right financial and monetary policies. This trend is already leading to a reduction in the cost of credits, so the environment for investment is becoming more favorable. The Central Bank is helping us — it recently reduced its bank rate to 120 percent [as heard].

We have outlined a number of special measures to be taken jointly with the Central Bank in the economy's financial sector. We will make them public in a few days by issuing a joint statement on economic policy for 1996. The thrust can be expressed in a few words: to reduce the rate of price rises to 1-1.5 percent a month this year is both possible and feasible. This is the main prerequisite for investment and for solving the problem of nonpayment of wages.

However, this is also the root of the main problem of adjusting the economy and the budgets of different levels to relatively low inflation. Nonpayments and budget debts are the most obvious manifestation of this problem. Therefore a stable financial and economic order in the country means, first of all, reducing nonpayments considerably and paying off debts without fail, and the first priority should be given to paying off wage arrears.

It is often said that the president and the government have made so many promises that the economy will collapse under the weight of new money. First, we never make empty promises. We are solving a specific problem in specific circumstances, including the budget approved by our parliament on the eve of the new financial year. This would probably surprise some people, but to be able to plan our actions and control all financial flows is new to us. In terms of settling accounts the difference is the same as, say, between the basic arithmetic operations. We have had nothing like this in previous years, but we have it now. We used to make guesses about clogs and hindrances in the financial system, but now we see them with the naked eye. Therefore it is not extraordinary that at the beginning of the year the president and the government gave priority to toughness and strictness in financial matters. In reality this means strict adherence to the logic of economics. If we want to see reproduction and investment growing, we need nothing else and there is nothing else.

Second, we will pay debts not by printing money but by using the money circulating in the economy. On the whole, our task resembles that of controllers who are drawing up various traffic timetables. The only difference is that instead of trains we have millions and billions stuck in the middle of nowhere, far away from their destinations or turned into sidings, and so on. That is our main problem.

Computers rather than printing presses will work hard. It would have been very easy to issue 4,000 billion rubles and pay off the public sector wage debts in one go. But that would mean that in a month we would have to issue another 8,000-10,000 billion, and again, and again, until kingdom come.

But we have already had all of this before; we have been through it for many years. There would be nothing in the shops; everything would be washed away at once. We cannot print empty money, money which is not backed up with goods. That would be a crime.

At present we are looking attentively at the structure of debts, the addresses, and the reasons why money is not getting through to people. We are finding many abuses. In essence we are setting up a unified system for implementing the state budget. The president has set this specific task and his criticism of the Finance Ministry, the Economy Ministry, and others was fair and convincing.

At present, for example, the budgets of six components of the Federation and about 40 ministries and departments, including the power-wielding ones, remain outside the treasury's control. What does this mean? It means that all of these budgets are in effect 46 financial black holes. Federal money goes in, but what happens next is something that still needs to be found out. Therefore, people are kept waiting.

That is just one example. There are many such crafty mechanisms. We are going to sort them out by using economic and administrative methods, bringing in the prosecutor's office where necessary. Today we can say to people: we will fulfill the task set by the president — to eliminate the debts in payments of wages to workers in the budget sphere and to workers in enterprises producing output for the state order.

In parallel with this, in order to reduce debts in the nonbudget sector of the economy, we will bring in a mechanism for paying compensation for material damage caused by not paying wages on time. A government commission will attentively check that payments are made on time at all levels of the budget. This commission will be headed by First Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Vasilyevich Kadannikov. Timetables are in operation for paying off debts in many regions. They are already producing positive results.

I am intentionally dwelling on this in such detail because it the most important task. The obstacles here have been cleared way. What has been planned for this year has been implemented. [as heard]

The elimination of budget debts will provide a spur for a reduction in nonpayments. In turn, this will make it possible to concentrate on production and exports and to begin investment projects. And this provides a basis for active measures in social policy.

The sequential nature of the tasks is clear. The government meeting gave a detailed analysis of each of these areas and outlined an action plan. The main thing now is to work to ensure that the planned measures produce results and begin to operate as they should. This depends on all of us. Of course, much depends on the government. We intend to tell you how our work progresses. We intend to inform you of this. We will make reports. We are obliged to do this and we are doing it.

Russia: Yeltsin Supporters Collect 8 Million Signatures

LD0303174496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1333 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 3 (Interfax) — Ten presidential action committees nominating Boris Yeltsin for Russian President have already garnered 8 million signatures supporting his re-election, a signature-raiser in the presidential action committee led by Yeltsin's representative in Moscow Vladimir Komchatov told Interfax.

This presidential action committee has collected signatures supporting Yeltsin's re-election as Russian President in central Moscow for about a month.

However, activists of this presidential action committee who for instance have collected signatures in the underground passage under Moscow's Pushkin square have violated election legislation because their signature lists do not bear the registration number of the action committee's certificate, an Interfax correspondent reports.

Under the Central Electoral Commission's instruction of January 22, before beginning the signature-raising, presidential action committees must put on signature lists the registration number of the certificates verifying their registration with the Commission. Otherwise, the signature-raising is not admitted, the instruction reads.

Under existing legislation, every constituent member of the Russian Federation can contribute not more than 70,000 signatures supporting one or another presidential hopeful. Signatures collected by one presidential action committee cannot be transferred to another presidential action committee.

A total of 1 million of voters' signatures is required for registering a presidential nominee with the Russian Central Electoral Commission.

Russia: Yeltsin, Popov Discuss 'Single Presidential Hopeful'

LD0103203296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1950 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 1 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin and leader of the Social Democrats movement Gavriil Popov met in Moscow Friday to discuss the possibility of the reformist forces nominating a single presidential hopeful, Popov told Interfax. The meeting was held on Yeltsin's initiative and lasted for about 40 minutes, he said.

Yeltsin firmly intends to continue the series of consultations to discover the entire spectrum of opinions existing in society, Popov said. Yeltsin plans to meet not only with those who are traditionally called democrats but with everyone who is interested in the continuation of reforms in Russia, he said.

Popov said he and Yeltsin had considered the situation in the country and the presidential election campaign.

Yeltsin has already met with leader of the Russia's Democratic Choice movement Yegor Gaydar.

During his recent meeting with the editors-in-chief of Russia's leading media, Yeltsin said he planned to meet with leader of the Forward Russia movement Boris Fedorov, and renowned eye-surgeon and leader of the Workers' Self-Government Party Svyatoslav Fedorov.

Russia: Yeltsin's Yekaterinburg Visit, Remarks Noted

964F1165A Moscow ARGUMENTY I FAKTY in Russian Feb 96 No 8, p 2

[Report by Aksana Panova and Yevgeniy Koleznev under the "Details" rubric: "B. Yeltsin: 'If I Deceive You, You Can Get Even With Me in the Elections'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 21 February, Sverdlovsk Oblast Governor Eduard Rossel intends to deliver to the Russian president's staff a bundle of letters, hurriedly put together by the oblast government in the wake of Boris Yeltsin's visit to Yekaterinburg. Elated over meeting his hometown folks, the president not only announced his intention to run for a second term but also promised a great deal and to many. Smart Sverdlovites, remembering that iron is best forged while it is hot, put in writing all the speeches of the dear Moscow guest and—forward, a demand to make good on the promises.

Not only Urals residents but all citizens of Russia ended up reaping the benefits of the verbal promises of the head of state. Even before his official statement on entering the presidential race, in encounters on city streets and the subway Boris Nikolayevich said to the crowd: "I will help you with your problems. If you elect me."

Yeltsin decided not to wait for the results of the expression of the popular will, however. Having recalled that he has his own fund, he began "providing" material support right away. To the Konfi confectionery factory—$10 million. To a war veterans hospital—5 billion rubles [R]. To Serovo residents—R15 billion for recovery from a natural disaster. To complete the construction of a maternity ward in Krasnoturyinsk—R3 billion. To the dairy industry—$7 million. X-number of billions—to subway construction, and another x-number—to someone else.... To all Russians, the president gave his word that not a single "empty" ruble is being printed any more—only what is backed up by gold reserves. And he assured the whole world through 170 foreign journalists present at a public meeting that if elected, he will continue moving Russia along the road of reforms.

Nor did the president leave the Chechen crisis out of his speeches. He said that he does not accept Nizhniy Novgorod Governor Boris Nemtsov's proposal to immediately withdraw federal troops from Chechnya. In this case the Russian-speaking population would suffer, as well as those Chechens who currently support peace negotiations with Russia. They will simply be killed. The president categorically opposes the "hawks'" proposal to apply scorched-earth tactics in Chechnya. He admitted that the current administration has made many mistakes in trying to resolve this conflict, and there is no justification for repeating them. Then he said that the Chechen knot has to be untangled within a matter of months.

As to aid to Chechnya, it will continue to be necessary because innocent people are suffering there now. But this aid should be smart. The funds should be targeted—only to the legitimately elected government and into demilitarized areas of the republic.

What will the situation be with respect to wages? The president assured that he has found "physical money" to pay off all arrears without starting up the printing press. And beginning in March there will be no problems paying wages from the federal treasury. Ditto for stipends, allowances, and pensions. "If I deceive you, you can get even in June, in the elections."

The time has long come to tackle abuses in higher government structures. The general procurator approached the president to ask for permission to initiate criminal proceedings against former acting General Procurator Ilyushenko, head of the Vologda Oblast administration Podgornov, and State Committee on Precious Metals Chairman Bychkov: "What do we do? We need advice, these are very high-ranking people...." What is there to consult on? There is a Criminal Code, consult it. Overall, about 1,200 different-level officials were convicted after the edict on combating corruption came out. Although the president did acknowledge that more than that number have not yet been exposed.

Anyway, when will a legal base be in place for the implementation of these economic reforms? About 500 draft laws are currently awaiting passage in the State Duma, said the president. In Boris Nikolayevich's estimate, it will take several years to pass them. While reform cannot wait. Therefore, he intends to select 200-250 most important draft laws and enact them by edict. The last line of each edict will say: Void on the first day of passage of the appropriate law by the Duma. Then perhaps the deputies will have an incentive to intensify their work.

The president is ready to give account of everything he has done over four years. The program and platform of presidential candidate Boris Yeltsin will be ready very soon. He will probably have to make another trip to the Urals before 16 June in order to discuss them with his hometown folks.

On the day of the presidential visit, Communists and their sympathizers gathered at the Year 1905 Square and later in front of the Youth Palace. This segment of the city population seems to be fed up with promises and demanded a correction to the course of reforms—by some 180 degrees.

Nevertheless, the president left his home town in a good mood. As he put it, he did not see any open rejection of his policy, and realized that he had many supporters—who perhaps do not fully share his tactics. Keep it in mind, though, that almost half of the electorate has not decided yet who to support....

Russia: New Left-Wing Alliance Backs Zyuganov

LD0403095996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0934 GMT 4 Mar 96

[By Pavel Kuznetsov and Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 4 (Itar-Tass) — Representatives of more than 20 left-wing parties and movements today gathered to form a single elections alliance called "The bloc of popular patriotic forces."

At a gathering in the State Duma lower house of parliament they signed an agreement on the nomination of a single candidate for the presidency of the Russian Federation at the June elections.

Communist party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov was named the bloc's single candidate.

Russia: Zyuganov Views Left-Wing Alliance's Program

LD0403121696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1203 GMT 4 Mar 96

[By Lyudmila Aleksandrova, Pavel Kuznetsov, and Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 4 (Itar-Tass) — Twenty-five left-wing parties and movements today signed an agreement to back one single candidate — Gennadiy Zyuganov — in the June presidential elections in Russia. Abstainers included diehard communist Viktor Anpilov and leader of the Russian national union Sergey Baburin.

The agreement, which is binding on all the signatories, stresses that "all activity within the framework of the election campaign of the single candidate from the popular patriotic forces of Russia will be conducted in keeping with an agreed plan and with the participation of all interested parties on the basis of regular working consultations on current issues."

The signatories include the Communist party of the Russian Federation, the Union of Communist parties-the Communist party of the Soviet Union, the movement "Power to the People," the movement "Spiritual heritage," the Agrarian party of Russia, the Agrarian Union, the Russian Young Communist League, and the group "Gennadiy Zyuganov for President."

Representatives of the parties and movements said at the signing that the agreement was open for signing and provided the basis for unification of all left-wing and patriotic forces in the election campaign.

After the signing, Gennadiy Zyuganov told reporters that he hoped for cooperation between the new bloc and such politicians as Aleksandr Rutskoy, Aleksandr Lebed, Stanislav Govorukhin and Svyatoslav Fedorov. "We are interested in unification with these people because we have no deep differences with them," he said.

According to Zyuganov, the alliance of left-wing forces has "a moderate, well-balanced programme" to offer. He noted that the version of the programme which is now being finalised provides for a multi-form economy, it is orientated toward the entire nation and it contains no radicalism.

The programme of the left-wing coalition can be published after it is discussed at a "big representative meeting" of participants in the left-wing bloc tentatively scheduled for the middle of March, Zyuganov said.

The movement "Labour Russia," the Russian communist workers' party and the Russian national union refused to sign the agreement. According to the press service of the Labour Russia movement, its leader Anpilov said he was "temporarily abstaining." He and another "refusenik," Sergey Baburin of the Russian national union, walked out of the room in which the document was being signed.

Russia: Nationalists Nominate Yuriy Vlasov for President

MK0103143896 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Natalya Gorodetskaya: "Radical Nationalists Nominate Yuriy Vlasov for the Presidency"]

[FBIS Translated Text] While democrats, just as their opponents, cannot unite around single candidates for Russian Federation president, the Central Electoral Commission had already registered, as of Wednesday, 59 action groups which had nominated 49 candidates. It appears that aspirants for the Russian presidency are all politicians who were more or less well known in the past and who are on record as persons rejecting the current leadership of the country and whose programs include the words "the state and social protection."

It looks like the honorary number 50 in this long and still incomplete list will be taken by Yuriy Vlasov, former world weight-lifting champion, author and former State Duma deputy. Speaking at yesterday's press conference in Moscow, the leader of the National Bolshevik Party, Eduard Limonov, announced that Mr. Vlasov was nominated as a single candidate of Russia's radical nationalist parties.

It is true that the coordination council of radical nationalists decided in St. Petersburg a little earlier to nominate as their candidate Boris Yeltsin "in the absence of another worthy candidacy." Later, however, they did find another more suitable candidacy than the Russian president. Yuriy Vlasov is in a combative mood, and he says he is confident to win at least 10 percent of the votes in the first round. "Our potential electorate is ten to fifteen percent of the voters who waver between the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] and the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation]," he stated confidently. Radicals have other goals than the Communist Party because, as the candidate for president of Russia put it, using their popular-patriotic ideas, "the insidious traitor" Gennadiy Zyuganov dealt "a blow in the back of Russian nationalists."

Collection of signatures in support of Yuriy Vlasov has begun.

Russia: Gorbachev Joins Presidential Race To Prevent Yeltsin Win

LD0103163896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1441 GMT 1 Mar 96

[By Tamara Zamyatina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 1 (Itar-Tass) — A statement announced on Friday by Soviet ex-president Mikhail Gorbachev on his intention to join the presidential race in Russia was supposedly made for one purpose: to prevent the election of Boris Yeltsin for the second term.

This supposition has grounds. An informed Russian politician shared information with Itar-Tass that leader of the Power movement Aleksandr Rutskoy (former vice-president of the Russian Federation) intends to join the presidential race without any hope for victory in order to annoy Yeltsin and to wrest from him at least a small part of votes.

It is quite probable, therefore, that the former Soviet president entertains the same ideas. He knows of course the results of public polls conducted by major funds, according to which Gorbachev may win between 0.5 and one percent of the vote.

Nevertheless, Gorbachev cannot forgive offence from the one who was conducive to his forced departure from the presidential office. The offended feelings of former Russian vice-president Rutskoy is also a driving force behind his election campaign.

It is self-evident that efforts by personal opponents of the Russian president will not form a serious competition to candidate Yeltsin. However, these efforts can deprive him of several percent of votes which may turn decisive in a Yeltsin-Zyuganov confrontation.

Therefore, the election campaign headquarters of the incumbent president should take into account sudden "underwater rocks" which may pop up during the presidential race.

Russia: Gorbachev Seen as Spent Political Force

MK0203135896 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 2 Mar 96 pp 1-2

[Report by Sergey Mulin: "Mikhail Gorbachev Finally Goes for Broke. The Former USSR President's Participation in the Electoral Campaign Drastically Intensifies the Psychological Intrigue in the Struggle for the Kremlin"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mikhail Gorbachev has spoken out on the upcoming elections. The democrats should first of all come together and nominate a single candidate for president. When asked whether he himself is ready to head the joint democratic forces, Mikhail Gorbachev said that he would not shirk the responsibility and, moreover, "has long been internally ready" to take such a step.

By the democrats the former Soviet president means center-left politicians, "from Svyatoslav Fedorov to Grigoriy Yavlinskiy," with whom he is ready to strike up an alliance. He admits that he can run for the state's top office on his own, but at the same time "is ready to bow to party discipline" if the joint democrats name a different candidate.

"I do not know happy reformers," Mikhail Gorbachev told NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA on leaving the Kremlin in the year of his 60th birthday. After the referendum on Ukraine's independence and the ratification of the Belovezhskaya Forest accords by the parliaments of all three Slav republics, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in Almaty and his resignation from the post of first and last president of the USSR became inevitable — so Boris Yeltsin's historical predecessor and political peer left the scene "feeling anxiety, yet with hope." Anxiety about the future has since then become the dominant feeling in society, while hopes still tend to fall short of the expectations of even the luckiest leaders.

The news conference by an initiative group for the nomination of Mikhail Gorbachev for president, which was scheduled for the last day [before expiry of the deadline for the registration of candidates], was canceled literally at the eleventh hour. There is little secret that Aleksey Manannikov, former senator from Novosibirsk, and his colleagues planned to spring a pleasant surprise on the public and their nominee precisely by 2 March — it is hard to imagine a better present for one's 65th birthday than 1 million signatures collected in one's support throughout the country.

Finishing at the Central Electoral Commission second after Zyuganov — before Yeltsin's millions collected in parallel by several initiative groups have been submitted — precisely such a moral victory over the incumbent president and his overthrower would have given the passion of a triumphant reformer back to Gorbachev, who lives in anticipation of the moment when he will again be called to big-time politics by society. Alas, the wheel of fortune turns too slowly — a million signatures has not yet been collected. Instead of the anticipated "Encore," the already worn-out "Bravo" to his former achievements resounds. [passage omitted]

Strangely enough, precisely in CIS republics, among the local Russian-speaking population, which is languishing under psychological pressure from local ethnic elites that hold dominant positions, the figure of the last Soviet president evokes the most nostalgic memories. It is in Russia that the mass consciousness perceives Gorbachev's departure as getting rid of a person who destroyed a Great Power. The "separatists" who replaced him — among whom the current front-runner of the ongoing Russian presidential race, Gennadiy Zyuganov, can safely be named, as ideologist and mastermind of the secession of the Russian Communist Party, a group of great-power advocates and nationalists within the CPSU, from its mother party — had ambitions that dwarfed those of the former CPSU general secretary, who just yesterday seemed to be excessively greedy.

For our country the six years under Gorbachev were like the last free breath of air after which, it is said, the soul parts with the heavy body, which becomes a liability for it, leaving everything behind. Memories of Mikhail Sergeyevich become warmer with every passing day, for any nostalgia for something that has been lost forever tends to be pure and light — he has a reputation as "a politician who did his job and left just in time." The political "tug-of-war" performed by Gorbachev and Yeltsin, which finally pulled the country from the morass of its reluctance to part with the heritage of real socialism, was left somewhere over there, beyond the bend of history, and few people want its return. The reluctant tandem of the two transition-period leaders is unlikely to make it for the second part of the disaster movie that Russia lived through in 1989-1991 — the denouement has already taken place, and the country has largely made its choice as to which route to take.

Undoubtedly, Mikhail Sergeyevich takes offense at seeing Zyuganov as his new successor picking up the cause of reform he launched — and Yeltsin, whom he has never forgiven, as a guarantor of protection and preservation. But such is life. Neither the role of "the British Queen of the CIS" nor the status of the "Deng Xiaoping of Russian reform" can satisfy Gorbachev's self-esteem.

His good physical shape visible against the background of his peer's corresponding problems, albeit not matched by corresponding political muscles, prompts him to reenter the stage without waiting for public applause. Is he well aware of the possible public reaction, is he ready to accept a few polite claps instead of stormy applause, let alone unconcealed boos and jeers from the audience? A death on the stage or a change in his line of business — this is the main question which Mikhail Sergeyevich should answer for himself (and for the country) on the day of his 65th birthday.

Russia: Security Council Chief Lobov Has Heart Operation

LD0403101996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0929 GMT 4 Mar 96

[By Tamara Zamyatina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW March 4 (Itar-Tass) — Oleg Lobov, the secretary of Russia's influential Security Council and the representative of President Boris Yeltsin in Chechnya, underwent a heart operation and is, evidently, in a grave condition, although there is no danger to his life.

A reliable Kremlin source told Tass on Monday that "the state of health of Oleg Lobov, who has recently undergone a surgical operation on the heart and is currently being treated in the Central Clinic Hospital, is adequate to the graveness of the illness, but does not pose a threat to his life".

Officially Lobov's state of health remains a mystery. "I am not authorised to give information on that issue", Security Council spokesman Valeriy Kadzhaya told Tass.

Some Council's officials, who spoke on conditions of anonymity, told Tass only that the aggravation of the heart disease of their boss was caused "by physical and nervous overwork" in connection with the fulfilment of his duties of the presidential representative in Chechnya.

However, they expressed open displeasure with media claims that Lobov's absence from office was caused by political reasons connected with the drafting of a peaceful plan for Chechnya. Lobov is known as a supporter of the use of force against Chechen separatists.

Russia: Aide Denies Soskovets Going on 'Long Vacation'

LD0303162896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1333 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 3 (Interfax) — Reports that Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets will go on a long vacation in the near future fail to correspond with reality, Soskovets' assistant Yuriy Mikhailov told Interfax Sunday.

Leader of the nationwide movement supporting Boris Yeltsin's re-election as Russian President Sergey Filatov said at a news conference on March 2 that Soskovets and Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Yarov would go on vacation for the entire period of the presidential election campaign. Filatov explained this by saying that Soskovets was expected to head Yeltsin's electoral headquarters while Yarov was to become the electoral headquarters' executive director.

It is not compulsory to take a long vacation as the first deputy prime minister in order to head the coordinating committee on Yeltsin's re-election as Russian President on the public basis, Mikhailov said.

However, Mikhailov said Filatov was right when he announced that Yarov planned to deal only with electoral activities in the near future and lead the executive committee within the team supporting Yeltsin's re-election for a second term.

Russia: NDR Regional Leaders Quit as Radicals Take Over

MK0203094796 Moscow MOSKOVSKIY KOMSOMOLETS in Russian 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by Aleksandr Belonovskiy: "'Party of Power' Passes Into the Hands of 'Men in the Street'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is common knowledge that no matter how hard Moscow politicians should try to prove to themselves and the rest of the world that it is they who are capable of being and must be the country's movers and shakers, the decisive role still belongs to the provinces, where most Russians live. Indeed, the winners in the last State Duma elections are precisely those political parties and movements that have influence outside the two capitals [Moscow and St. Petersburg] owing to their ramified networks of regional branches. Among them is "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR].

The number of regions with NDR organizations has reached the record level: 83, and the total number of functionaries working in them is close on 1,500. Whence such a number of active supporters of a movement born less than a year ago? The answer may seem apparent: The party of power was assured support from the regional leaders, who, having received the necessary instructions "from the top," right away provided all that was necessary for work, ranging from money, transport, and premises to their own persons as heads of the regional organizations.

As the actual political situation was changing, so was the attitude of the regional organizations toward the center. Conferences are being held everywhere today, where they advise to the movement's congress, which has now been moved to the second part of March, how to proceed further and whom to recommend for the position of president. Understandably, no unexpected things happen here: All of the regions to the last one are ready to back Yeltsin. The conferences also hold planned reelections for the leadership. Their results are rather curious.

First, regional leaders, who combine their position with heading the local branches, are leaving in droves their leading positions in the movement. Although they sound quite loyal, they nonetheless would not remain in the NDR. Why associate themselves with a political force whose chances to win turn out to be not as high as many used to think.

Nature is known to abhor a vacuum, and the former leaders are being replaced literally by men in the street. The latter, paradoxically, constitute the main threat to the movement's course. More radical in their views than those who stood at its foundation, they are trying to urge the leaders in Moscow to shift from the centrist positions to radical ones. This, of course, contravenes the objectives and ground rules of the men in Moscow.

So far the Moscow leadership has managed to curb their counterparts in the regions, but how long would it last is hard to say. Election conferences have been held so far in less than half the regional organizations. Should such a tendency keep up, a heated battle might flare up during the coming congress between representatives of the movement's headquarters and delegates from the regions, which could result at least in a significant correction of the course, if not in splitting the pro-government movement.

Russia: Kulikov Reviews MVD Activity for 1995

964F1264A Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Irina Skarnikova and Oleg Rubnikovich: "Activity of Criminal Groups in Russia Is Growing: But the Militia Is Still Maintaining Control Over the Situation—Minister of Internal Affairs of Russia Anatoliy Kulikov Summed Up the Activity of His Department for 1995"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Internal Affairs [MVD] of Russia has published a report for citizens on the results of the activity of the organs of internal affairs in 1995, excerpts from which we present on the pages of NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA. Despite the fact that this is a very ordinary annual ministry report, it is attracting far more attention than the previous one inasmuch as, first, it "blends" aptly into Boris Yeltsin's preelection campaign, and second, it shows the achievements of Anatoliy Kulikov in the role of minister of internal affairs of the Russian Federation.

The idea runs throughout his report that ordinary citizens, who are having a difficult time making ends meet, are moving closer and closer to professional gangsters. More than 3 million inexperienced countrymen last year were "buried" under the debris of financial pyramids and pseudo-banks, which were multiplying. The number of unemployed persons reached 6 million and amounted to 8.2 percent of the total number who are economically active. The incomes of one- fourth of the country's population dropped to a level lower than the subsistence wage. The negative processes that are occurring in society are engendering changes in the structure of the criminal world—of the number of exposed criminals, 45 percent did not have a source of permanent income.

As in the reports of previous years, it was noted that criminal tension not only continued over the entire territory of the Russian Federation last year but also displayed a tendency to get stronger. The minister associates this most of all with the increasing power of organized crime. As before, it was characterized by traditional types of crime, such as murder, robbery, and extortion. At the same time the active integration of organized criminal groups (OPG) in the economic sphere for the purpose of acquiring super-high profits continued, which strengthens their potential and arouses the special concern of law enforcement organs today. The main seats of activity of the large criminal clans remain the central region, first and foremost Moscow and Moscow Oblast, and republic, kray, and oblast centers.

Anatoliy Kulikov responded positively in his report concerning the edict of the president of the Russian Federation "On Urgent Measures for Protection of the Population from Gangsterism and Other Manifestations of Organized Crime," which was at one time subjected to obstruction. In Mr. Kulikov's opinion, it is now the only normative document that makes it possible for the police to at least maintain parity in the fight against the mafia. The minister thinks that the normative base catastrophically lags behind reality and soon this edict alone will be inadequate for the fight against organized crime, and that at the present time it has to be "broken" structurally. He noted with regret that there are delays in the process of adopting extremely necessary federal laws to repress crime: "On the Fight Against Organized Crime," "On the Fight Against Corruption," and "On Responsibility for the Legalization of Criminal Incomes."

How difficult it is for the police to oppose criminal clans is indicated by the number of crimes that are being committed by OPG's, growing at a furious rate. Last year about 24,000 crimes were solved, including 60 "contract" murders. Criminal proceedings were instituted against almost 15,000 leaders and active members of gangster formations.

However, according to the report, the results of the activity of the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] last year were not all that bad. First of all, as is noted in it, internal affairs organs on the whole maintained control over the criminal situation in the country.

Last year the number of solved crimes increased by 4.9 percent and totaled 64.5 percent. Guilty parties were ascertained in the commission of 837 grave criminal offenses. Valuables in the sum of R715.3 billion were confiscated from criminals. In suppressing OPG activity, the police confiscated 11,000 individual weapons, including 6,400 individual firearms.

According to the minister of internal affairs, all this was possible through the incredible efforts of his subordinates, who are working themselves "to exhaustion." Moreover, it is difficult to call the financial and material-technical position of the organs of internal affairs and the Internal Troops anything other than critical. In the opinion of the minister, the main reason is the unrealistically reduced budget. Despite the tough economy, the ministry entered 1996 with a debt of R3.4 trillion. Moreover, the police were weakened by the continuous exodus of personnel and material resources to Chechnya. Thus, according to the report, the organs of internal affairs used only internal resources in the execution of assigned tasks last year. Thus, the structure of the central apparatus of the MVD and its operational subunits was restructured somewhat. Changes were made to the plan of management of the operational-investigative subunits, and the cooperation of subunits in the fight against organized crime with other services of the crime police was put in good order. In the near future the MVD plans to conduct a similar reorganization in the localities. In spite of the fight undertaken by Anatoliy Kulikov against corruption in his own ranks, no definite strategy is seen in this measure.

Mr. Kulikov places the establishment of firm ties to law enforcement organs of other states, first of all the CIS, among the achievements of the organs of internal affairs. According to the minister, the Conference of the Ministers of Internal Affairs and the Bureau for Coordination of the Fight Against Organized Crime and Other Types of Crime on the Territory of the CIS has finally stopped being formal. Also, an institution of representatives of the MVD of Russia in foreign states was established.

The conclusion can be drawn from the minister's report that Anatoliy Kulikov has rather actively undertaken to strengthen his department. At the same time he understands that without the necessary attitude toward his service in the higher echelons of power, it will be difficult to do anything. In the meantime, as we see, he is not encountering mutual understanding in the state apparatus.

Russia: MVD Economic Crime Chief Interviewed

MM0103103296 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 27 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

["Topical Interview" with Major General Aleksandr Dementyev, chief of the Russian Internal Affairs Ministry Economic Crimes Administration, by Gennadiy Lyulkin; place and date not given: "Corrupt People Must Be Jailed! And They Will Be! Major General Aleksandr Dementyev, Chief of the Russian Internal Affairs Ministry Economic Crimes Administration, Declared"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Lyulkin] An unprecedented redistribution of property is taking place. This is very bounteous soil for all sorts of crimes and swindles. It can be seen from the "Report..." which your ministry placed at RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA's disposal that corruption has badly infected sectors and departments which deal with property or raw materials. But not only these. Bribetaking and extortion are also widespread in spheres to which ordinary citizens most frequently turn: in schools, higher educational institutions, health care establishments, and municipal services. The following were caught red-handed taking bribes: the chief of Tomsk Residential Building Maintenance Section — for unlawful operations concerning the distribution of municipal housing; and the chief of the Rayon Housing Administration of the "Taganskoye" Territorial Administration in Moscow — for lowering the rates of payment for municipal services to a tenant. The dean of an institute in Ufa was also caught red-handed for bribery — on being searched, 36.8 million rubles [R] and over $3,000 was confiscated from her. How is this process to be halted?

[Dementyev] It is primarily necessary to undermine the financial strength of criminal syndicates. Our service sets itself precisely the goal of undermining the mafia's financial strength. Today, according to our estimates, over 40 percent of monetary assets are circulating in the shadow economy. It is perfectly obvious that this money is not being invested in industry, agriculture, or the social sphere. This money reproduces crime. However many guns we confiscate, however many bandits we catch, we will not achieve success until the financial basis of the criminal world has been undermined.

The struggle against corruption is our administration's second most urgent task. The state will not function normally while a lot of officials in the top echelons of power take bribes. The president sets this task today — to shake corrupt high officials so that the ground burns beneath their feet. Only by instilling order in the top echelons of power will it be possible to speak of successes in politics, economics....

Our service occupies a leading place in the struggle against corruption. We have the appropriate operational potential. There are experienced specialists with a thorough knowledge of economics. For bribes are, as a rule, linked to some economic interest.

But here is the paradox. Absolutely everyone is in favor of the struggle against corruption. I do not know a single federative organ, a single party, or a single person who would oppose it. But hundreds of defenders appear in an instant when we seize a specific high-ranking official by the arm. The press and television get involved. The law enforcement organs start to be pressured. Intolerable work conditions are created.

An example of this is provided by Yevgeniy Bychkov, former chairman of the Russian Federation Committee for Precious Metals and Precious Stones.

How many articles appeared with attacks on the prosecutor's office! It is bad in all respects, it infringes the state's interests, and similar accusations. But not one person asked this: What harm did Bychkov do by his actions? And yet this harm runs to $170 million. That is just according to preliminary estimates. If this money were used to pay wages, how many problems would be resolved.

[Lyulkin] But what did Bychkov do with this $170 million?

[Dementyev] This money was transferred abroad on his orders. It stayed there. No one mentioned this. It is considered bad form to speak of this.

We declare: Enough! Enough of mixing up your own pocket with the state's! Today we have serious criminal cases relating to St. Petersburg City Hall. The prosecutor's office is conducting an investigation, and we are providing operational accompaniment. There are a number of officials there who are literally steeped in corruption.

We are also working with regard to certain ministries, whose individual officials have also mixed up their own pocket with the state's. We say: That's all! Enough! It is now your turn to take the rap, corrupt gentlemen! We will not bother with the little fish anymore. We have seen for ourselves that, however many little fish we take, the result is the same. All because a fish starts to stink from the head....

These are our priority tasks. It is perfectly obvious that our administration's role is increasing. Of course, this is flattering to us. But it is, above all, a very great responsibility. We do not fear this responsibility.

[Lyulkin] Aleksandr Semenovich, I realize that your administration has the noble aim of removing from power organs officials who take bribes. And yet a doubt creeps in: Is the intensification of the struggle against corrupt people not linked to the president's election campaign?

[Dementyev] Absolutely not! First, the criminal proceedings of which Boris Nikolayevich has spoken were instituted considerably earlier. This happened last year, when no one was thinking of the election. I am talking of something else — the desire to instill order in those power structures whose officials are steeped in corruption. Precisely this is the purpose of the president's strategic statement. I believe that he is right. Dirty officials shame the state and its head. Insofar as improper deeds are usually linked with the president or the premier. But this is not always so. The president did right to name officials who were caught with "feathers on their snout."

[Lyulkin] Have there been a lot of crimes in the banking sphere?

[Dementyev] A bank means a concentration, a clot of money. In one way or another all crimes concern precisely this sphere. Banks circulate shady capital and perform unlawful actions. There are quite a few such banks. Last year, for example, criminal proceedings were instituted, if I am not mistaken, against 40 bank employees.

Nonrepayable credits amount to over R50 trillion. Many of these credits were issued in the knowledge that they would not be repaid. In these cases there is certainly a compact between the person receiving this credit and a bank employee. Today we pose the task like this. Is there a nonrepayable credit? Did an official know of this credit? This means that he must be jailed.

But another question arises here. Unfortunately, relations in the banking sphere are not fully regulated by legislation. Of course, this entire R53 trillion cannot be recovered. This is clear. It is lost to the state. But if criminal liability for the nonrepayment of credits is introduced and if we are handed a legal mechanism, I am sure that we will be able to react quickly and efficiently. Someone has taken a nonrepayable credit, let us say, and we have instituted criminal proceedings, conducted a search, sequestrated property, and thus recovered part of the credit. A considerable part. But, unfortunately, all our requests have so far remained just good wishes.

Today the minister and the ministry see it as the chief task to create a legal field which will clearly reflect state interests. And, in addition, to create mechanisms for law enforcement organs to influence offenders. We are a punitive organ. We work only if a particular article of the Criminal Code has been violated. There is no article?

Sorry, but in that case we are detached observers. At best we will write a representation.

We cannot be guided by a revolutionary perception of the law, as used to be the case. Only the law defines the sphere of our activity. This is democratic and correct. Today we set ourselves the task of working actively with the Duma and proving to the deputies that these laws are needed. I mean, above all, the laws "On the Legalization of Criminal Incomes," "On the Declaration [of income]," and "On Accounting."

A paradoxical situation has arisen today. Commercial structures do not keep accounting records. They do not care for them. Absolutely no one checks them out. It is simply impossible to make demands on businessmen. If these laws are adopted, then we can boldly state that order will be instilled in the economy.

[Lyulkin] Your boss' proposals are on everyone's lips today. How do you rate the reaction?

[Dementyev] Quite honestly, the situation that has taken shape around these proposals does not surprise me. The ministry's proposals affect the interests of very powerful financial big shots. They forgot long ago that the money which they possess is state money. They have appropriated it and regard it as their own. In addition, the interests of very many near-mafia structures, which graze around them, close by, have been affected. It would be naive to expect any other reaction.

Moreover, possessing a colossal level of information in the economic sphere, the ministry did, in fact, forecast this surge of negative emotion. We were morally prepared.

But this is what is interesting. What do the minister's proposals say? Today a very great deal of state money ends up abroad. In the accounts of "fat cats" who parasitize on the sick Russian economy. The minister is proposing to establish rigid state control over the movement of state funds. For example, if a commercial bank has received targeted credit for a particular program, it must account for what it has spent every last kopek of the money on. But what happens? The bank takes the credit, converts the money, and sends it abroad, and the banker buys himself a villa and transfers the money to his own currency account — that is all! Fine for everyone!

[Lyulkin] Any recent examples?

[Dementyev] Certainly! Criminal proceedings were instituted recently against a number of bankers. I cannot name them at present, since an investigation is under way.

I repeat: The state is obliged to protect its money. To protect, after all, its own taxpayers, who pay taxes in the hope that they will do them some good.

There is absolutely nothing bad about this. So why do people accuse the minister? Because high-ranking officials, who have long been accustomed to rummaging in the state's pockets, are simply afraid of losing this privilege. Just try to push them away from the trough! Hence the hysteria. Hence the attacks on the minister.

[Lyulkin] The minister's proposals clearly were not dictated by personal emotions. But people suspect that this is a kind of crafty maneuver to divert from Kulikov the responsibility for some of the wage arrears. The promised clearing of the arrears will now be perceived as being to the personal credit of a minister who was not afraid to risk his own career for their sake.

[Dementyev] People in uniform have not been paid their wages for months. The people who bore on their shoulders a considerable part of the war in Chechnya. For none of us has not been through "hot" spots and not received combat awards, including myself, incidentally.

Therefore the minister, on seeing how policemen are suffering, could not, of course, fail to be concerned about that. He could not fail to raise this question. It is simply stupid and absurd to speak of some career interests. It would have been easier to sit things out in silence. Or to go about with an outstretched police cap: "Give me a little money." There is a knot of pain here. These proposals are dictated by knowledge of the situation. And nothing more.

In addition, I have also heard these arguments: The ministry is poking its nose into other people's affairs. First, I can say that we have a very high level of information about the criminal processes taking place in the economy. Second, we are proposing not for the sake of personal interests. We are proposing where to get money from so as to rectify at least partially the calamitous situation of individual categories of Russians. What is bad about this? A banker transfers money abroad. Is this good? For the banker — yes! For the people — no!

[Lyulkin] A whole number of specialists, ranging from Yegor Gaydar to Aleksandr Khandruyev, have unanimously deemed the idea of nationalizing commercial banks to be useless and harmful.

[Dementyev] First, we also believe that the nationalization of banks and commercial structures is totally unnecessary. If a bank has its own assets and funds — for God's sake — it has a right to manage them as it sees fit. But, at the same time, no commercial secrecy must conceal the improper deeds that are perpetrated in respect of state money. I believe that the state, having allocated credit to a bank or another commercial organization, is simply obliged to control where it is spent.

It is in this sphere that there is a dispute. People shout: Nationalization! What expropriation is there here? I have given money, and I have a right to get it back. I have a right to ask: "What have you done with my money?" Nationalization — this concept does not feature in the minister's proposals. There is no subject for dispute and debate here. There is one thing here — the pain of the minister and the ministry. There is the desire to help the state and society to get back at least some of the money that has been spent in a talentless way.

Russia: Yeltsin Makes Changes to Council for Local Administration

LD0103191796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1813 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 1 Mar (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin issued today an edict "On Introducing Changes in the Council for Local Administration Under the President of the Russian Federation." A report by the press service of the president of the Russian Federation says that with the aim of improving the council's activity, the following changes will be introduced: Sergey Filatov shall be removed from the council, and Nikolay Yegorov, member of the council and head of the Russian Federation presidential administration, shall become cochairman of the council. Akhsarbek Galazov, president of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania and member of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, shall be included in the Council.

Russia: List of Enterprises Not Liable for Privatization Expands

LD0103144496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1328 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Mar 1 (Interfax-FIA) — The Russian government has expanded the list of strategic enterprises not liable for privatization.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin signed government resolution 169 to this effect on February 26 to supplement the government list of September 1995, sources told Interfax Friday.

The new list includes 141 companies working in air and sea transport, the bread industry, communications, metallurgy, the timber industry, the machine-building industry and trade.

Privatization rates will be slowed down, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Kazakov, in charge of privatization, told a news conference Wednesday. "Every privatization project will now be thoroughly considered," he said.

Military Issues

Russia: Grachev Dismisses Reports of 'Slow' Army Reform

LD0103185396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1818 GMT 1 Mar 96

[By Anatoliy Starukhin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VORONEZH, March 1 (Itar-Tass) — Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev on Friday denied allegations that the restructuring process in the army is too slow.

"Not all the reproaches about the slow process of the military reform are appropriate," Grachev said at a meeting with an armoured brigade deployed in the Voronezh region.

The withdrawal of many thousands of Russian troops from abroad, the reduction of the army from two million 800,000 to one million 700,000 and making changes in the inner structure of the armed forces are the basic measures to be taken during the army restructuring, Grachev said.

"The information service is the only thing which is being reformed at a slow pace in the army," he said.

Russia: Grachev's Visit to Voronezh, Boguchara Units Detailed

MM0403122396 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 2 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Pelts: "Army General Pavel Grachev Visited Voronezh and Boguchara"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Defense Minister Army General Pavel Grachev is continuing his tour of inspection of Moscow Military District units. On arrival in Voronezh he stressed first of all that now is a suitable time to take stock of combat readiness and this his tour of none other than the Moscow Military District is intended to clarify the district troops' combat training plans and resolve servicemen's social and everyday problems.

Incidentally, it is precisely in the Voronezh area that there are several units which were withdrawn at the time from the Far Abroad. They have naturally faced acute problems in the provision of facilities and organization of planned combat training. Lieutenant General Vladimir Chuzhikov, commander of a guards army corps, reported on the measures being taken in this direction.

In the course of his visit the Russian Federation defense minister was able to personally convince himself of the close professional ties between the corps commander and local organs of power. Voronezh Oblast Administration Head Aleksandr Kovalev and Bogucharskiy Rayon Administration Head Nikolay Shmikhov are doing everything to resolve the servicemen's numerous problems. In Voronezh itself the new "Voronezh" residential camp has already been commissioned, and 834 officers has just received keys to apartments. Many facilities problems have thus been successfully eradicated in practice, but there is still a great deal to do. Addressing servicemen in the new camp school, the defense minister announced that, in addition to the housing already built, agreement on the construction of another 500 apartments for guards personnel has been reached with the leadership of a German construction firm.

The situation is somewhat different at the garrison located in the vicinity of the settlement of Boguchgara. The guards tank division commanded by Major General Aleksey Verbitskiy was transferred here, to virtually a bare-field site, two years ago. At the time the defense minister, when visiting the unit, set specific tasks for the provision of facilities. And the time had now come for him to look at what has been done.

In an interview with your KRASNAYA ZVEZDA correspondent the division commander noted that the main questions linked with building a new camp have been successfully resolved in the two years which have elapsed, although many projects have been "frozen" because of a lack of resources. Nevertheless the division is combat-capable and carrying out its planned combat training. In addition most division officers have been in the zone of the military conflict in Chechnya.

Talking with personnel from the guards tank regiment commanded by Guards Lieutenant Colonel Yevgeniy Berezin, the defense minister dwelled in detail on the progress of the implementation of military reform in the Russian Armed Forces. He stressed that, despite all the funding difficulties, the young Russian Army has managed to implement a whole package of reform measures. And this is even confirmed by the example of the Moscow Military District, which used to be a second-echelon operational district and has now become virtually a border district. Similar processes are also taking place in units of the Leningrad and North Caucasus Military Districts, where new troop groupings are being created from scratch.

Before leaving, Russian Federation Defense Minister Pavel Grachev presented valuable gifts to a group of officers and also announced early promotions for several officers.

Russia: Building Plot Said Illegally Obtained by Grachev

MM0103163596 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 5

[Report by A. Ternovoy: "Is Grachev Already in the Reserve?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gelendzhik — Nina Zatsepina, Russian Federation State Duma deputy for the Novorossiyskiy Electoral District, has disseminated an official document indicating that Defense Minister Pavel Grachev circumvented the law to obtain a plot of land on the Black Sea coast. According to facts at the deputy's disposal, it has come to light that on 13 April 1994 the Gelendzhik Administration issued a number of decrees on the allocation of plots of land on which to build private houses to Transbaykal Military District servicemen being discharged into the reserve. One of these decrees speaks of the discharge into the reserve in the fourth quarter of 1994 of "Citizen Pavel Sergeyevich Grachev, born in 1948, who serves in the Transbaykal Military District and has over 26 years of calendar service."

On the orders of the mayor of Gelendzhik "Citizen P.S. Grachev" was allocated 1,050 square meters of land in the region of the Chayka Hotel — a highly prestigious district of the resort city. A detached house is now being built on this site by Defense Ministry special subunits.

Russia: Duma Deputy Comments on Failure of Army Reforms

LD0203104696 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 0730 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We turn once again to the recent message the Russian president sent to the Federal Assembly. As you may recall, in this message Boris Yeltsin acknowledged that military reform has failed. Perhaps this statement came as a surprise to some people but not to Aleksey Arbatov, deputy chairman of the State Duma's defense committee, since he has frequently — sometimes here on Mayak — criticized the reforms being carried out, or rather the lack of such reforms. Our correspondent Lidiya Podolnaya began her interview with him by asking why reform has not taken place.

[Begin recording] [Arbatov] This has come about because, in the first place, the Defense Ministry is headed by people who are incapable of implementing this military reform but only create the appearance of reform. Grachev has for many years been saying that military reforms were progressing successfully but complained that money was not being provided.

Of course, it is a fact that one cannot reform a department from within. There has to be very political leadership of this reform.

[Podolnaya] That is the main thing?

[Arbatov] Yes, that is probably the main thing, and then it would have been clear earlier that the Defense Ministry's leadership was unable to change anything. In this regard, President Yeltsin's complaints about the absence or failure of military reform should have been addressed primarily to himself, because President Yeltsin has not taken up this issue over his whole four-year term; he has drawn the Army into politics and has thus created the worst of all possible evils. The Army is in ruins, the reform has not taken place, it has been drawn into internal politics and it has no political, civilian leadership or supervision.

[Podolnaya] What is to be done?

[Arbatov] What is needed is for our current president, or the new president who wins the presidential elections, to set up a special military reform group or committee which would be above the Defense Ministry. There are no ready-made solutions. Over the four years of collapse we have reached such an impasse that it has become many times harder to get out of the situation now.

It is proposed that the Army be reduced by 500,000 men or go over to a professional contract basis, or that 100,000 billion [currency not specified] be added to the military budget. Probably we need to do both. We need to reduce the size of the armed forces, because the present size cannot be justified; currently it is 1.5 million and they want to make it 1.7 million, plus 600,000 civilians, plus over 1 million in other power-wielding departments. This is unjustified at present, both from the point of view of security threats and from the point of view of our economic and demographic possibilities.

There must be reductions if only because at present we are virtually eating up the whole military budget. It all goes on the upkeep of the Army. There is nothing left to buy weapons or to re-equip with new weapons. There is nothing left for combat training. There is nothing left to ensure normal living conditions and material provision for the officers, not to mention the soldiers. There is nothing left for military science.

So we have an Army which is large in size but is unshod, unclothed, untrained, and embittered to an increasing extent. Such an army cannot defend the country from external threats and is becoming more of an internal threat to the state, because it is being drawn into politics. Therefore, we need to reduce the size of the Army and to increase military expenditure as far as possible — not at the expense of health care or education, of course, but by taking other measures when forming the federal budget.

[Podolnaya] But this is not something for the near future.

[Arbatov] Everything happens as quickly as we wish to do something. Any journey starts with the first step. [end recording]

Russia: NATO Activity in N. Europe Concerns Military

LD0103132496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1304 GMT 1 Mar 96

[By Anatoliy Yurkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 1 (Itar-Tass) — NATO's military activity in the north of Europe is forcing Russia to contemplate adequate deterrence measures, General Valeriy Dementiev, staff member of the Russian Institute of Defence Studies, believes. The continuing large-scale NATO military exercise in Norway is evoking Russia's concern, he told Tass today. According to Dementiev, the experience of U.S. and NATO operations in the Persian Gulf in 1991 and in the Balkan Peninsula in 1995-1996 shows that NATO's potential is big enough for staging military operations with limited objectives outside the post-Soviet area.

In the opinion of General Dementiev, three possible directions of an aggression are especially dangerous. First, it is the northern direction, following the recent decision of Norway to extend NATO activities to the north of the country. NATO operations against bases of the Northern Fleet are the key part of it. The second direction is connected with plans to create a 60,000-strong Baltic Corps with branches in Germany, Denmark and Poland, which will be committed to action in case of Russia's conflict with the Baltic states. Third, the southern direction is now being formed, with Turkey playing the key role in it, following the appeals to give NATO security guarantees to countries of the Caspian basin, similar to those that were given some time ago to the Persian Gulf states.

In the interests of national security and for the sake of keeping a possible enemy away from such actions, Russia has to form an operational-tactical deterrence force, which may be integrated in the reserve force of the commander-in-chief of the Russian Armed Forces. The deterrence force may include missile and strike airforce units, fitted with highly accurate weapons. In case of danger, it may be moved to the area of a possible conflict and targeted at the most important facilities.

This situation does not fall in line with the consolidation of European security, but it is not Russia which created it, but the NATO bloc, which has no historic perspective, General Dementiev believes.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Most Duma Deputies Said Opposed to START Ratification

MK0103130996 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Ivan Rodin: "Intrigues Over START-2. Deputies Opinion Poll Came in Handy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prospects for ratification of START-2 by the State Duma will be considered at closed-door parliamentary hearings scheduled for 5 March. This will be the second round of such hearings, because the first one, which was held back on 19 February, showed that the information submitted by military experts was insufficient for the deputies to make up their minds on several key problems concerning ratification.

It is essential for deputies to have a clear view of what impact START-2 will have on the maintenance of the requisite strategic potential of the Armed Forces and how much it is in line with Russian defense interests, Lev Rokhlin, chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee, told NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA. In his words, they also need to have an idea about "the possibility of accepting limitations provided for in the treaty at a time of NATO's planned expansion, continuing U.S. efforts to create ABM systems, and the development of conventional offensive arms, including high-precision weapons, by most Western states." Financial and economic requirements for fulfilling obligations under START-2 are not clear either.

There is a special preparatory commission dealing with the problem of ratification at the Duma, which was set up by four committees: those on international affairs, defense, security, and geopolitics. This commission is made up of 23 deputies and nine employees of the Duma apparatus. The commission has adopted a plan that calls for the completion of parliamentary hearings by 4 April. The commission is headed by Vladimir Lukin, the chairmen of the other three founding Duma committees being its cochairmen. After the second round of hearings on 5 March, which will be attended by Duma leaders and faction heads, the commission might decide to send petitions to the president and the government requesting extra materials on certain aspects of START-2.

However, Aleksey Mitrofanov, the commission's cochairman and head of the Geopolitical Committee, thinks that, since most deputies are opposed to the treaty anyway, there is no reason for putting off a vote on it again and again. His view is based, among other things, on the results of a poll conducted among about 100 lawmakers, of whom approximately one half were against ratification. Yet, a slightly smaller number of parliamentarians said that they had not made up their minds, which is an argument in favor of the treaty cited by its supporters. In addition, a major part of the 100 respondents were Communists and their allies, whose views on ratification of the treaty have been known without any polls.

Russia: Duma Poll Bodes Ill for START-2 Ratification

MK0103130896 Moscow KOMMERSANT-DAILY in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by Yevgeniy Yuryev: "Regarding START-2 Ratification. Duma Pollsters Pass Their Verdict"]

[FBIS Translated Text] If the Treaty on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Weapons (START-2) were to be submitted for ratification today, the State Duma, in all likelihood, would spurn it. This little consoling conclusion follows from the results of a poll conducted at the Duma by the Geopolitics Committee. Of 103 deputies polled, only seven are ready to vote for ratification of the treaty right now. A total of 51 respondents are opposed to ratification, and another 45 parliamentarians have not yet made up their minds. The poll was conducted at the initiative of Aleksey Mitrofanov, chairman of the Geopolitical Committee and foreign minister in the Liberal Democratic Party's [LDPR] "shadow cabinet." Assessing the results of the survey, one should probably make provision for Mitrofanov's own attitude to the treaty (he is far from being its proponent) and also for the fairly unrepresentative sample of the deputies polled. According to Mitrofanov, the sample was picked at random, but for some reason the pollsters ran for the most part into Communists (Communist Party [CPRF] faction members accounted for nearly half the respondents). None of them supported the treaty. Meanwhile, the pollsters appear to have simply passed over supporters of ratification during the survey. "Yabloko" and "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR] each had only seven of their deputies polled. Three Yavlinskiyites spoke for immediate ratification, another three said they needed time to think it over, and one was opposed to it. In the NDR, almost all those polled had not yet made up their minds. Professor Pavel Bunich said that he was not much of an expert on the problem. The note "knows little about the issue" was put next to the name of Stanislav Govorukhin from the "People's Power" deputy group. Four advocates of ratification were found among 17 "independents" and deputies from the "Russian Regions" group who were also covered by the poll. The LDPR flatly rejects the treaty, while out of 10 Agrarians mentioned on the list, two are "against" it and another 10 are still mulling it over.

Given the situation at the Duma, for the time being supporters of START-2 prefer to put its ratification off. Vladimir Lukin, chairman of the International Affairs Committee, citing "insufficient information submitted by experts," suggested that consideration of the treaty be put on hold and requests be sent to the president and government requesting additional material giving reasons for signing START-2. Meanwhile, a special commission tasked with preparing the treaty for ratification is due to finish its work by 5 April and to submit its recommendations to the chamber. The Duma Council decided to hold another round of hearings on START-2 in early March. They will be held behind closed doors at the General Staff. Mitrofanov hopes that there the deputies will be able to obtain all the requisite information and that there will be no need to send extra requests to the president and government, which may become a convenient pretext for further postponing ratification.

Russia: Duma Plans Review of Agreements on Creating CIS

MM0103160596 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 3

[Unattributed report under "CIS: Chronicle, Events, Facts" rubric: "Deputies Will Return to Belovezhskaya Forest"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The State Duma Council — the leading organ which plans the work of the lower chamber of the Russian parliament — has sent draft documents providing, in particular, for a revision of the Belovezhskaya Forest agreements on the creation of the CIS to the Duma's committees and factions to be studied. This has been announced by State Duma Deputy Chairman Sergey Baburin.

Regional Affairs

Russia: Tatar Leader on Upcoming Election, Federation Council

MM0403101296 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 2 Mar 96 p 3

[Interview with Vasiliy Likhachev, deputy chairman of the Russian Federation Council and chairman of the Tatarstan State Council, by Dmitriy Mikhaylin, datelined Kazan-Moscow; date not given: "'Corridor' for Regions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent met with Vasiliy Likhachev, deputy chairman of the Federation Council and head of the Republic of Tatarstan State Council.

[Mikhaylin] As we know, according to the voting results of the 17 December elections, the "Russia Is Our Home" movement's candidates won a majority in Tatarstan. In your view, what is the reason for this?

[Likhachev] Although we do have special status within the Federation framework, we are interested in seeing the federal organs of power work normally and stably. In addition it must be noted, bearing in mind not the results but the election process itself, that Russia has finally begun to approach what can be called democratic power formation mechanisms.

[Mikhaylin] In your opinion, according to what criteria will the republic's inhabitants elect their president? Whom would you call a real contender for this post?

[Likhachev] I, as a republic citizen, will use several criteria when assessing a candidate for the March election. First, the future president must have an inside knowledge of the republic's problems and not only identify them but also propose ways of solving them. Second, this man must be a centrist in all regards.

[Mikhaylin] You and President Shaymiyev have taken up posts in the new Russian Federation Council. Do Tatarstan's leaders have their own view of the tasks of the Russian parliament's upper chamber?

[Likhachev] Of course we do. Chiefly it is that the Federation Council is an organ in which all Russian Federation components are represented, and that means every region must be heard. The present Federation Council has its pluses and minuses. For example, it is not absolutely clear to me how the upper chamber will work in conditions whereby its deputies and future leaders do not enter it on a permanent basis. I think that we will have to find some kind of legal "denouement." Because it is clear that it is impossible to be in Moscow and Kazan at the same time.

I think that the most important task in the Federation Council's activity, besides approving legislative acts, is to formulate a clear and coherent national and regional policy.

Russia: Tatar President on Yeltsin Election Chances, Chechen War

LD0303174396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1333 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 3 (Interfax) — Present Russian President Boris Yeltsin will have a realistic chance of winning the presidential elections only if the war in Chechnya is ended, President of Tatarstan (an internal Russian republic) Mintimer Shaymiyev told Interfax.

The introduction of federal troops to Chechnya was "a tragic error" committed by the Russian president, Shaymiyev said.

Nevertheless, Shaymiyev said he saw no reasonable alternative to Yeltsin's re-election as Russian President. "Despite all errors committed by Yeltsin and now especially favored by his opponents," the fact is that Yeltsin has not abandoned reforms, he said.

"We should not forget that it was Yeltsin who, even earlier than (former USSR president Mikhail) Gorbachev, began combatting the old-regime system," Shaymiyev said. He praised Yeltsin for his continuous commitment to democracy.

Nevertheless, Shaymiyev did not discount the possibility that other forces might come to power in Russia.

However, nobody but Yeltsin could end the Chechen conflict, Shaymiyev said he believed.

At the same time, Shaymiyev said that Yeltsin had "too little time left to make up his mind on the peace plan regarding Chechnya." "Delay on this subject could defeat him," Shaymiyev said.

Russia: Tatarstan, Nizhniy Novgorod To Cooperate in Oil Refining

LD0203161996 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1500 GMT 2 Mar 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tatarstan and Nizhniy Novgorod have declared the start of the implementation of a major project. They have decided to solve by joint efforts a number of economic and social problems in the two regions simultaneously.

[Correspondent Ivan Pankov] It is about 500 km from Nizhniy Novgorod to Kazan. Nizhniy Novgorod has a major oil refinery which is working at half capacity, whereas in Tatarstan some of the oil is still unrefined. In both places equipment is worn out and there is no money for modernization. So talks were held and a financial and industrial group was set up. The commercial banks agreed to put money into the industry. Representatives of Tatarstan and Nizhniy Novgorod believe that the industry now has a future.

[Begin recording] [F.Mukhamedshin, prime minister of Tatarstan] The interests of Tatarstan and the Nizhniy Novgorod region here are obvious.

[B.Nemtsov, governor of Nizhniy Novgorod region] In Russia we have one problem now — how to normalize the work of industrial enterprises, how to keep jobs, how to find ways of receiving wages on time, and how generally to get the economy out of the crisis. [end recording]

[Pankov] And the purpose of the project is to solve these problems, because the Russian Government's abolition of the duty on oil sales abroad puts the industry in a critical situation. If it does not become competitive then the day will not be far off when, experts believe, it will be necessary to cut down on oil extraction. The funds of financial and industrial groups are making it possible to reconstruct the petroleum industry in the two regions and to bring it up to world standards. [video shows plane on runway and two leaders meeting, Kazan street scenes, meeting, and news conference]

Russia: Interview With Ingushetia Vice President Agapov

MK0103150496 Moscow NOVAYA YEZHEDNEVNAYA GAZETA in Russian No. 8, 29 Feb - 6 Mar 96 (Signed to press 28 Feb) p 1

[Interview with Boris Agapov, signed "D.M., our correspondent": "North Ossetia and Ingushetia Are Being Dragged Into War"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow authorities are pinning "Dudayev accomplices" and "advocates of war" labels on Ingushetia President Aushev (a general, Afghan War veteran, Hero of the Soviet Union) and Vice President Boris Agapov (a general, Afghan War veteran).

The reason: Aushev and Agapov have lodged a sharp protest against the actions of 58th Army subunits on the republic's territory. We were able to talk with Agapov.

[D.M.] Boris Nikolayevich [Agapov], the 58th Army commander, whose subunits shelled the village of Arshty, has stated that "Ingushetia is Russia's land and the troops can move around unhindered."

[Agapov] They can. In Tula, in Ingushetia, and in Moscow. But not to run over and kill [people], not to ruin the road which has just been built for the first time over "70 years of the soviet government."

If troops wage a war, one set of rules apply. But in this case a law on [concerning] emergency situations is in force, and the latter was not declared. If it is peace time, the local authorities should be warned, in accordance with the law, about possible actions of troops.

[D.M.] Were you warned?

[Agapov] No.

[D.M.] Did you ring to find out?

[Agapov] We spent three days trying to find out what was going on.

[D.M.] Did the leaders of the power ministries consult with you? In winter 1995, too, the population were not warned of the movement of columns of armored vehicles.

[Agapov] Since the start of the events in Chechnya, nobody has really tried to find out what the situation in our republic is.

[D.M.] The troops are known to have been moving in to "take Bamut." What did the village of Arshty have to do with it?

[Agapov] The Chechens who defended Bamut could see that the tanks were not bringing humanitarian aid, and they moved forward to intercept the columns. The federal troops' howitzer fire at Bamut came from the territory of North Ossetia (this was not reported — note by "NYeG") and from the area of Arshty. Shells were flying the entire length and breadth of Ingushetia. A volley was fired from a helicopter at the republic's head of government. The population in North Ossetia expressed a sharp protest (this was not reported — note by "NYeG"), and in our republic we could not evacuate approximately 3 thousand civilians from the area of combat operations.

[D.M.] Why?

[Agapov] We had not been informed of the action that was being prepared. A military secret. Never mind the secret! They should have themselves then brought the population out of danger area....

[D.M.] Boris Nikolayevich, many people know that terrorist acts of Dudayev's army are directed against those localities from whence combat operations were conducted (both Budennovsk and Kizlyar have air fields). Thus, is there a threat of terrorism in Ingushetia and North Ossetia?

[Agapov] You have answered the question. This is the way the drawing [of Ingushetia] into the conflict is going on.

[D.M.] As usual, they have pinned on yourself and Aushev "separatist" labels.

[Agapov] We wanted to perform our duty, no more and no less, and to rescue civilians. The relatives of the dead have brought suits against the federal authorities. And we are being rebuked for having become "hurt" because of the ruined road. We are of course sorry [for the road], but people are a thousand times more important! This is why we do not say a word about the road....

[D.M.] You were already accused of the fact that gunmen for Chechnya were being trained in Ingushetia. At that time, you invited those willing to, to come over and check up on "operational information." What was the result?

[Agapov] Much as had been expected, nothing could be confirmed....

[D.M.] Your interpretation of the incident?

[Agapov] I do not think this was a decision of the "top leadership." But it is most probably bungling of the performers. President Aushev has already stated that the power departments are acting without control, and their argument that this is "Russia's territory" is untenable. Russia is 89 federation components rather than the staff of the North Caucasus Military District or a proving ground for dumb maneuvers.

[Signed] D.M., our corr[espondent]. From the [NYeG] editors. Ingushetia, which barely survives by the will of its leadership, which gives shelter to hundreds of thousands of refugees and which stays out of the conflict, is being dragged into it by the federal authority. They want to turn it from a zone of peace into a "zone of responsibility." It is quite possible that they want to sacrifice the life of "part of the electorate" to a state of emergency which would also make it possible to postpone the presidential elections.

Russia: Magadan Communists Want Yeltsin on Public Trial

MK0103132396 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Oleg Kryuchek: "Magadan Communists Demand Court Trial for Russian President"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Magadan Oblast organization of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation decided to combine two public actions: the collection of signatures in support of Gennadiy Zyuganov's candidacy in the coming presidential election and the collection of signatures for instituting a court procedure against Boris Yeltsin. Today's president interests Magadan's Communists as a figure personally responsible for failed operations of federal troops in Chechnya and generally for kindling war in the North Caucasus.

The head of the oblast Communist organization, Igor Yurov, stated that Boris Yeltsin could be tried by a public court of the peoples of Russia. The trial, the Communists think, should most necessarily be public in the same manner as was the trial of the Communist party. However, since such an organ as a public court of the peoples of Russia does not exist, the Communists would be quite satisfied with ordinary criminal proceedings. At present, this initiative has been forwarded to the other regional branches of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation from where, in Mr. Yurov's words, rather favorable responses are coming in.

The Communist organization of Magadan Oblast proposes to stop the war in Chechnya exclusively through political methods. The Communists, however, do not support the general enthusiasm for collecting signatures for the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the Caucasus. On the contrary, they propose that there be maximum coordination in the operations of the federal grouping in Chechnya, that some Chechen rayons be declared an emergency zone, and that there be appropriate reactions to all incursions by Dudayev's armed formations.

Russia: Far East Begins Radioactive Waste Recycling Project

LD0303174896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1546 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIVOSTOK, 3 March (INTERFAX-EURASIA) — The Maritime Territory (the Russian Far East) has started financing the project of recycling liquid radioactive wastes, worked out by scientists of the chemistry institute of the Far Eastern branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The money comes from the territorial fund to assist science, the new technology and innovation activities.

The project is alternative to that for recycling liquid radioactive wastes with participation of foreign firms.

Far Eastern scientists believe that the attraction of foreign assistance is fraught with undesirable consequences. For example, they are concerned with a possible construction in the Maritime Territory of a powerful installation for scrapping nuclear wastes of neighboring countries. Such installation can be commissioned only 30 months after the beginning of its construction. Meanwhile, several thousand tonnes of liquid nuclear wastes received after the servicing and repairs of nuclear submarines of the Pacific Fleet have accumulated in the territory. They need to be recycled urgently.

The alternative version is based on the use of unique technologies developed by Far Eastern scientists, a spokesman for the committee for science and higher schools under the territorial administration has told Interfax-Eurasia.

Russia: Radioactivity Exceeds Limit in Khakassian Lakes

LD0303164596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1333 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KRASNOYARSK, March 3 (INTERFAX-EURASIA) — The content of radioactive substances in the famous medicinal Shira Lake in the Khakassian Republic (Siberia), a favorite place of holidaymaking for inhabitants of the Republic and the neighboring Krasnoyarsk Territory, exceeds five times the permissible level.

The figures were obtained during the recent ecological expedition led by Professor of the Krasnoyarsk State Academy of Nonferrous Metals and Gold Anatoliy Sazonov who is an expert of the ecology committee of the Khakassian Republic. Members of the expedition examined the sites of gold mining.

They told Interfax-Eurasia that some other adjacent lakes also have high radioactivity. The concentration of radioactive substances which exceed the permissible level 1.5-2 times, was found in wells with drinkable water in the villages of Shira, Duim and so on.

Russia: Decree on New Kamchatka Oil Supply Plan

MM0103171196 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 29 Feb 96 p 5

[Russian Federation Government Decree No. 81 "On Measures To Ensure the Delivery of Petroleum Products to Kamchatka Oblast," signed by Russian Federation Government Chairman V. Chernomyrdin and dated Moscow, 2 February 1996, plus commentary by Dmitriy Ostankin: "Less Money Will Be Burned in Fireboxes"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In connection with the serious situation that arose with regard to supplying petroleum products to Kamchatka Oblast in the 1995-1996 fall-winter period, the Russian Federation Government resolves:

1. To adopt Kamchatka Oblast Administration's proposal, agreed with the Russian Federation Ministry of Fuel and Energy, the Russian Federation Ministry of the

Economy, the Russian Federation Ministry of Finance, and the Russian Federation State Customs Committee, to deliver for export from January-February 1996 1.2 million tonnes of crude oil per year using extrabudgetary sources of funding, and to use the proceeds (allowing for delivery expenses) to import petroleum products for the oblast's needs.

2. To authorize Kamchatka Oblast Administration to purchase the quantity of crude oil indicated in Point 1 of the present decree on the internal market by agreement with Tyumen Oblast Administration and, with the cooperation of the "Nafta Moskva" Open-Type Joint-Stock Company, to sell the oil on the external market and then import the petroleum products.

3. The Interdepartmental Commission for the Regulation of Questions Connected With the Use of the System of Main Oil Pipelines, Petroleum Product Pipelines, and Terminals at Sea Ports for the Export of Oil and Petroleum Products Outside Russian Federation Customs Territory, on receiving the appropriate applications, is to ensure that the 1.2 million tonnes of oil (per annum) acquired on the internal market is included in the schedule for the transportation of export oil on the main oil pipeline system.

[Signed] Russian Federation Government Chairman V. Chernomyrdin
[Dated] Moscow, 2 February 1996

Commentary

Only a few years ago distant Kamchatka was supplied with fuel oil and other petroleum products by rail from the Angarsk oil refinery to Vladivostok or Nakhodka and thence by sea in tankers. However, in recent times our freight carriers' tariffs have outstripped the quality and quantity of the freight transported, so that, for example, the price of Russian fuel oil delivered to Kamchatka has risen tenfold. And a kilowatt hour of electricity from this fuel oil breaks all records in Russia, costing 1,500 rubles. In other words, nine-tenths of the money spent on fuel oil is burned in the fireboxes [of trains] and does not produce a single calorie of heat.

Government Decree No. 81, signed 2 February 1996, should ensure the delivery of petroleum products to Kamchatka according to a completely different plan, one that operated before the abolition of quotas on oil exports. But now oil will be allocated to Kamchatka Oblast not from the quota for state needs, but through the oblast administration's acquiring oil with extrabudgetary resources (credits and resources from the oblast's power engineering and other enterprises). Petroleum products will subsequently be delivered to Kamchatka according to the same plan: The "Nafta Moskva" company (recommended by the Ministry of Fuel and Energy in the place of "Balkar Trading" of unhappy memory) will sell the oil purchased from "Kamchatka" funds on the external market, since the oblast administration itself does not have access to the pipeline, and with the money produced from the sale of the crude oil the oblast administration is to purchase fuel oil and other petroleum products from any of the nearest foreign exporters — American or Korean. Plenty of them are willing. A Korean company has already sent three tankers of petroleum products to Kamchatka's shores on credit "on the strength of the government decree."

It should be noted that this option for supplying Kamchatka Oblast is paradoxically (but economically!) justified by the "lawlessness" — in the expression of M. Sitkov, first deputy head of the oblast administration — of the Russian market. In winter, when fuel oil reserves are down to two or three days against the usual norm of 20-30 days, the oblast administration receives in response to its SOS signals the answer that there are no tank cars to carry the freight, that the tanker is not fully loaded, or that it cannot dock because of the tide. Sometimes there are no problems with train, tanker, or weather, but Vladivostok "detains" 20-30 percent of the fuel oil shipped for its own heating needs.

If foreign suppliers have problems, Kamchatka does not know about them. If a tanker is contracted to dock on the 15th of the month — the seas may run dry, but the tanker will be there in the port. And perhaps actually on the 14th rather than the 15th. So as not, God forbid, to pay the forfeit. But most curious of all is that the fuel oil shipped from Korea is produced, it can be said, entirely from our own oil: West Siberian and, partly, Kazakh oil. All this oil goes to the coasts of these countries, which are near to Kamchatka, mainly via the port of Novorossiysk. And 1.5 million tonnes of crude oil must be dispatched for processing just to supply Kamchatka with heat and light for one quarter — and how much profit this oil brings in from commission and other charges, and how many jobs it creates (alas, not for us).

The only consolation is that the people of Kamchatka will greet the next new year not just with candles and in fur boots, but in warmth around a lighted fir tree.

Economic Issues

Russia: 1996 U.S. Direct Investments Said To Exceed $3 Billion

LD0303174796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1333 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, March 3 (INTERFAX) — According to preliminary estimates, U.S. di-

[illegible] investments in the Russian economy are expected to exceed $3 billion in 1996, Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Nikolay Drozdov told Interfax.

If so, the amount of U.S. 1996 direct investments in Russia will be nearly twice as big as U.S. companies' investments in Russian enterprises during the last three years, Drozdov said.

During 1992-1995, direct foreign investments in Russia totalled $4 billion, Drozdov said, adding that the United States accounted for about $2 billion out of the sum.

However, this figure cannot be considered as satisfactory, Drozdov said. He said U.S. investments in the Hungarian economy during the respective period exceeded U.S. investments in Russia by more than two times.

Russian and U.S. companies have already signed a number of large contracts under which U.S. investments in the Russian economy during the next decade will total about $30 billion, Drozdov said. Russia plans to receive in 1996 over $[illegible] billion under these contracts alone, he said.

Drozdov said the contracts primarily concerned the participation of U.S. companies in the development of Russian oil and gas fields.

Russia created conditions for a stable input of foreign investments in 1995 when laws regulating the performance of foreign capital in the country, including the law on agreements on production sharing and the law on state regulation of foreign economic activities in Russia, came into effect, Drozdov said.

Russia: Soskovets: Government To Continue 'Tough' Currency Policy

LD0203145696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1434 GMT 2 Mar 96

[By Oleg Velichko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, 2 March (ITAR-TASS) — The government will continue its "tough policy aimed at stabilising the national currency," First Vice-Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets told journalists on Saturday.

Soskovets said the rouble corridor is critical to these efforts and will "remain effective at least until July 1, 1996."

Among the government's top priority tasks for 1996, the vice-prime minister named "the reduction of monthly inflation to less than 2 percent."

He said that monthly inflation was 4.1 percent in January 1996 and dropped to 2.8 percent in February.

"We plan to reach a monthly rate of inflation of 2 percent by conducting a tough budget, monetary and credit policy and using non-inflationary sources to finance budget expenditures," he said.

The experience of the last few weeks has shown that strict control exercised by the government "allowed us to ease the problem of wage payments."

He blamed delays in the payment of wages and salaries on ineffective work of the directors of enterprises.

Soskovets also brushed off their criticism with regard to the rouble corridor, saying that "for exports to bring profit, the heads of enterprises, instead of complaining about the corridor, should reduce production costs and mobilise additional internal resources."

Russia: Chernomyrdin Announces a Lower Inflation Policy

LD0103163496 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1612 GMT 1 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Gennadiy Yezhov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 1 March (ITAR-TASS) — The Russian Government and the Central Bank will issue shortly a joint statement on economic policy which plans to decrease the growth rate of prices to 1-1.5 percent per month. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said in an exclusive interview with ITAR-TASS today that "achieving the goal, which is quite realistic and achievable," would make it possible to tackle an important problem — to adapt the economy, finances, and budget on all levels to the conditions of the financial and monetary stabilization.

The prime minister said in particular that we are planning to reduce uncleared payments, to eliminate debts of enterprises and the budget, and, first of all, to clear wage arrears. Viktor Chernomyrdin assured that as the result of all these measures, "the Russian economy will not collapse under the pressure of new money, as some critics of the president's and government's course are trying to frighten us." "We are going to act strictly within the framework of the budget, which was for the first time approved before the new economic year. We shall clear the debts, not at the expense of emissions," the head of the government underlined.

Russia: Spending Increase on Chechnya Unlikely

MK0203140196 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 2 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Svetlana Lolayeva: "The Government Proposes Increasing Budget Expenditures for Rebuilding Chechnya by 3.7 Trillion Rubles and Helping Depressed Regions by Cutting Off Transfers to Donor Regions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] More than two weeks overdue, the government has finally submitted to the State Duma a draft law: "On Introducing Changes Into the Federal Law 'On the 1996 Federal Budget,'" which contains a quarterly breakdown of expenditures, revenues, deficit and sources to the finance budget deficit, the departmental structure of budgetary expenditures, the list of federal target programs, and the Federal Investment Program for 1996. Furthermore, the cabinet proposes supplementing the 1996 federal budget law with a number of new articles.

One of them enables the government to partially redistribute the resources of the Federal Fund for Financial Support of the Federation Components. It is planned to redistribute them in the following way: Resources from the fund due to the regions whose own tax revenues exceed expenditures will be directed in additional financial aid to Federation components where the level of budget imbalance (including transfers) exceeds 20 percent. In the government estimate, there are at least 10 territories where the economy is in a depressive state (Nenets, Evenk, Komi-Permiak, Aginskoye Buryat, Ust-Ordynskiy Buryat, and Koryak Autonomous Okrugs, Kalmykia, Adygeya, Karachayevo-Cherkessia, and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast). Considering that out of the 89 Federation components only seven are donor regions while the others are subsidized, it is quite likely that in spite of the discontent of the senators representing the donor regions, the majority of members in the parliament lower and upper houses will relate to the government proposal with sympathy.

On the other hand, another government amendment in the budget will certainly meet with opposition on the part of most deputies. In addition to the 1.5 trillion rubles [R] appropriated for Chechnya, it is proposed that — in pursuit of the January presidential edict: "On Measures To Rebuild the Economy and the Social Sphere of the Chechen Republic in 1996" — another R3.7 trillion be added, 1.5 trillion of which is to be sent to housing construction and rebuilding programs. The additional funds for the investment program to rebuild Chechnya are to be raised within the budget through a proportional sequestering of appropriations for state investment by ministries, departments, and Federation components. Deputies of the Fifth Duma, at the close of last year, rejected changes to the 1995 budget which envisioned antedating expenditures on Chechnya already made, in the amount of R5.1 trillion, and cutting expenditures provided for in the 1996 budget from 2 trillion to 1.5 trillion. It can hardly be expected that the deputies of the present Duma, especially in the face of the presidential election, will approve the appropriation of additional funds (which, incidentally, constitute one-tenth of all investment expenditures included in the budget) to rebuild Chechnya, where military action continues.

The draft law on amending the 1996 budget also proposes empowering the government to balance last year debts to the federal budget on the part of suppliers based in a particular Federation component and federal budget obligations to compensate to this component for expenses involved in the maintenance of social infrastructure and housing transferred in 1994-1995. Furthermore, it is proposed to convert the federal budget debt to the Pension Fund for the payment, in 1995, of state pensions to an overall sum of R3 trillion into state securities. This will result in an increase of the state internal debt by the same sum, reaching R319 trillion.

International Affairs

Ukraine: Moroz, FRY Premier Cited on Relations, Cooperation

LD0203120696 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 0930 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Belgrade — At a meeting with Ukrainian Supreme Council Chairman Oleksandr Moroz, Federal Yugoslav Prime Minister Radoje Kontic stressed the importance of Ukraine's role in restoring the membership of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia [FRY] — as the successor state of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — in all international political and economic structures. According to a UNIAN correspondent, Oleksandr Moroz emphasized that supporting Yugoslavia was Ukraine's strategic foreign policy task. However, in his opinion, the most pressing issue at the moment was establishing bilateral relations.

The chairman of the Ukrainian Supreme Council said he supported the immediate signing and ratification by the Ukrainian parliament of agreements between the Ukrainian and FRY governments on suspending double taxation, financial and banking cooperation, the mutual protection and encouragement of investments, international passenger and freight transport by road, and scientific and technical cooperation that are being prepared by the governments of both countries.

In the view of Radoje Kontic, the visit to Yugoslavia by Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma will give concrete expression to Ukrainian-Yugoslav relations, will help establish a visa-free regime between the two states and help promote to the rank ambassador Ukraine's charge d'affaires ad interim to Yugoslavia. All the possibilities exist today for the setting up of a joint Ukrainian-Yugoslav bank, he said.

According to Oleksandr Moroz, owing to the economic crisis in Ukraine, the state had limited means to make purchases in the scientific and technical sector and in aircraft construction. For this reason the participation of Yugoslav capital in these sectors would be mutually advantageous.

Radoje Kontic noted that the full lifting and not suspension of UN sanctions against Yugoslavia would lead to economic stability in the state. He thanked Oleksandr Moroz for Ukraine's consistent stance aimed at the complete lifting of sanctions against his country.

Ukraine: Official Comments on Minsk-Moscow Economic Treaty

WS0403112596 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 2008 GMT 3 Mar 96

[Report by Halia Pavliva]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, March 2 — During a meeting in Moscow this week, Belarus President Alyaksandr Lukashenka said he is seeking the reunification of the former Soviet Union.

Speaking to a delegation from the Council of the Russian Federation, headed by the chairman of the upper chamber, Yegor Stroyev, Lukashenko said, "If a situation arises where it becomes possible to sign a treaty to re-unify the Union, then I would do everything to make it possible to gather in Belovezhskaya Pushcha (Belarus) to sign it."

Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister of Economy, Roman Shpek, commented on Lukashenka's statement earlier this week, saying that it would not influence Ukraine's policy toward the CIS.

"Economic cooperation remains the primary issue for us," said Shpek, adding, "We will cooperate both with Belarus and Russia as long as it's economically beneficial."

Shpek refused to comment on Ukraine's government reaction to the signing of an economic treaty between Moscow and Minsk, saying, "Such a treaty should not interest Ukraine. We are not going to interfere in other countries' interstate relations."

Ukraine: Economic, Political Relations With Russia Examined

AU0303184296 Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian 29 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[UKRINFORM report: "On the Principles of Good-Neighborly Relations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Intensification of economic cooperation with the Russian Federation is of strategic importance for Ukraine. It is precisely strengthening the partnership in the economic sphere, maintenance and further improvement of the cooperation procedures, developed over years, as well as new forms of cooperation that constitute the long-term factor, which, in the final analysis, must determine political relations at an interstate level and influence their development. This is what Ukraine's Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk stated during his meeting with the delegation of the Russian Federation State Duma headed by its head Gennadiy Seleznev.

As Yevhen Marchuk pointed out, Ukraine's economic activity today is largely associated with Russia.

This is graphically indicated at least by the import-export indexes, which are oriented 50 percent toward the Russian market. However, the actually existing potential has been used inefficiently and not in full. For example, for both objective and subjective reasons, Ukraine has practically lost the Russian foodstuffs market for its goods. Both Ukraine and Russia are missing much because of such a situation.

In the opinion of the Ukrainian prime minister, there now exist real prospects for upgrading the Ukrainian-Russian contacts. Apart from the traditional scenarios of cooperation, in particular in the sphere of power engineering and energy resources, it is necessary to give more attention to the creation of financial-industrial groups and transnational companies.

From this point of view, of great significance is harmonization of the national legislations in Ukraine and Russia. The given issue is particularly topical in the case of customs legislation and border cooperation. According to the participants in the meeting, intensification of the Ukrainian-Russian contacts at the level of parliaments — the supreme legislative bodies of the two states — could significantly promote the given process. Also from the viewpoint of ratifying the already achieved accords as soon as possible.

It was particularly stressed that signing a fundamental political treaty between Ukraine and Russia would have removed quite a number of the presently existing problems. The sides have expressed their interest in concluding it as soon as possible. As pointed out, the state visit by Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, in the course of which the signing of the treaty is scheduled, will give a new impetus to the development of the bilateral cooperation.

Apart from this, intensification of partnership relations between Ukraine and Russia must also be promoted by the beginning of practical work of the mixed Ukrainian-Russian commission, headed by prime ministers. The commission is expected to hold its first meeting in March in Moscow.

In the context of the subject matter, its participants also touched upon problems of insufficient development of mutual relations in the humanitarian sphere, the issue of the Black Sea Fleet, and other important issues.

Continuing the topic of trade and economic cooperation, the prime minister touched upon the question of the Customs Union. Ukraine is inclined to believe that the model for such a union must be based upon European standards and take into account the well-tested international norms. It is only possible to achieve this through the implementation of accords on free trade regulations. Unfortunately, as was stated, the corresponding accord between Ukraine and Russia is practically not implemented.

This conversation, in the course of which the sides tried to discuss the entire range of Ukrainian-Russian relations, concluded the program of the two-day official visit to Ukraine by the delegation of the lower house of the Russian Federation parliament.

Ukraine: Settlement of Gas Debt Reached With Russia

WS0403104596 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0310 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Feb. 29 — Ukraine owes nearly $112 million for natural gas supplied by Russia in 1995, and Russia's GazProm stock company and Ukraine's UkrHazProm have agreed to settle the debt in the first half of 1996.

The settlement will include up to $50 million worth of housing construction for GazProm and $60.4 million worth of material and technical resources.

Furthermore, UkrHazProm's Janurary exports of natural gas exceeded the amount proscribed in its agreement with Russia's GazProm by nearly 25 million cubic meters, and Ukrainian consumers exceeded normal usage of Russian gas by about 2 billion cubic meters during the same month.

According to a protocol signed this week between the gas companies, UkrHazProm will be supplied with an additional 4.4 billion cubic meters of Russian gas in February and March.

GazProm confirmed payments in effect for Ukrainian wholesale buyers of Russian gas, including United Power Systems at 72 percent of gas value; InterHaz at 64 percent; and UkrZarubizhHaz at 16 percent.

Ukraine: Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Arrives

LD0303204196 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 2000 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Zhang Deguang has arrived in Ukraine on a three-day official visit. The aim of the visit, which will end on 5 March, is to hold political consultations between the two countries' foreign ministries. The Chinese official will hold talks with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko and Deputy Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Hryshchenko. He will also meet Volodymyr

Butkevych, chairman of the Supreme Council Commission for Human Rights, Ethnic Minorities, and Interethnic Relations.

The sides will discuss a number of issues concerning bilateral cooperation. They will exchange opinions on some aspects of international concern, including cooperation and partnership within international organizations, above all, the United Nations.

Ukraine: Iranian Foreign Minister Arrives in Kiev

LD0403120996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1142 GMT 4 Mar 96

[By Mikhail Melnik]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV March 4 (Itar-Tass) — The development of Iranian-Ukrainian relations will be the subject of the forthcoming talks between Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Ukrainian officials.

The Iranian Minister, who arrived here on Monday for a two-day visit, is to be received by Ukrainian parliament chief Oleksandr Moroz, Prime Minister Yevgeniy Marchuk and is to hold talks with his Ukrainian counterpart Gennadiy Udovenko.

The Iranian Minister is to convey an invitation to the leadership of Ukraine to attend a ceremony to open a railway which will link Turkmenistan and Iran. The ceremony is scheduled for May 13.

Ukraine: Columnist on Future European Security System

WS0103135096 Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian 27 Feb 96 p 6

[Article by Oleh Oliynyk: "From Romanticism to Pragmatism. Ukraine in the Context of European Security"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In Switzerland in early February, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry made quite an interesting statement at a news conference.

I believe, Perry said, that every country should redefine the concept of neutrality in the present-day world. The meaning of neutrality in the Cold War years is obvious. However, today when a Russian brigade maintains peace in Bosnia as part of a U.S. division, there is no longer full clarity on this issue. We are currently living in a completely different world. Speaking about neutrality against a background of opposing blocs or Armed Forces, one should say that such forces do not exist anymore. All countries, the Pentagon chief goes on to say, that pursued a policy of neutrality during the Cold War should now think what neutrality is all about in the world in which we live today.

Certainly, this statement was meant first of all for Switzerland, the host country. Perry invited its residents to "think" about participating in the Partnership for Peace program. But in our opinion, this also applies to Ukraine, a state that proclaimed its neutrality and resolved not to participate in any blocs in 1990, when it was still a part of the USSR and not yet formally a sovereign state.

That fundamental position was proclaimed on the eve of great changes. The events that followed force us to think whether Europe has really stopped being an arena of two adverse ideologies, blocs, and systems, whether we really live in a period of geopolitical pluralism (according to Zbigniew Brzezinski), and whether Ukrainian neutrality has really become an inseparable component of the policy conducted not only by our state, but also by its neighbors in the region and on the continent.

Given the latter circumstance, it would be very interesting to learn about the current opinions of some Eastern and Western political scientists. All of us, of course, remember the Memorandum signed in December 1994 by Great Britain, Russia, and the United States, committing themselves to respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, and borders, as well as to refrain from exerting economic pressure on it. At that time, in exchange for nuclear disarmament, Ukraine managed to receive official and documented assurances about its place among sovereign states from the "powers that be."

The most recent reverberation of the Memorandum are the words uttered by U.S. President Clinton this month, when the Romanian ambassador presented him his credentials: "I believe that a conclusion of bilateral agreements with Hungary and Ukraine will strengthen the region's stability and will help Romania become a NATO member." In other words, the American President directly connected the need for Romania to settle all disputable issues with its neighbors with membership in NATO.

The admittance of Ukraine to the Council of Europe, too, opens a road for us to a world of international cooperation based on equality and partnership.

However, the ideal is a far away prospect. Ukraine's neutrality, not backed by its own economic, military, and political capabilities, can very soon dissipate under the pressure of reality. And this is as follows: The neo-Gaullean party which is now in power in France has prepared a draft of the French position for the next EU conference devoted to revision of the Maastricht Treaty, set for late March in Turin. The document, cited by the Moscow newspaper NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA, says that a goal of European integration is to create a "Great

Europe" which would include East European and Baltic states, except for the former USSR successor states.

In fact, the same thing is proposed in a plan devised by a group of German political scientists, with W. Weidenfeld at the head — a European Union "from Sicily to Nordkap, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Bug River." "An integrated Europe of 27 countries will be an immediate neighbor of Russia and the CIS zone on one side, and with the Mediterranean area, represented by Arabic Islamic states, Turkey, and Israel, on the other.... The Moscow-controlled former Soviet Union zone is excluded from this European Union zone."

The future NATO eastward expansion looks quite logical in this context. It seems that our former allies will stand on the Ukrainian border as defenders of the foremost boundaries of a new Europe and EU.

Then, what will be left to choose? To throw oneself in the embrace of the Tashkent CIS collective security treaty, or to attempt to be in the buffer "gray" zone between the European poles.

As we can see, the choice is not large; precisely speaking, both options are mutually connected and diffusive in nature. Finnish-style neutrality, whereby Ukraine would be pro-Western politically while closely cooperating economically with the former Soviet republics, as some political scientists suggest, appears to be nothing more than just a foggy dream. In the 1950's, Finland became one of the initiators of the comprehensive cooperation of five North European countries, and only after that it launched cooperation with the Soviet Union. At the same time, it never allowed the Kremlin star-spangled bozos to slap it on the back or create common defense systems coordinated by Moscow.

We hope that NATO will become a basis for creating a new European security structure; therefore, the Ukrainian diplomatic community views a gradual and evolutionary, and not mechanical, expansion of the alliance as a normal prospect. But this prospect, too, appears to be far-fetched. For the time being, leaders of NATO states on either side of the Atlantic Ocean declare that nothing else but NATO is the "cornerstone" of the alliance of democratic states. In other words, one should understand that NATO members are one Europe, and nonmembers are another Europe.

Creation of a new European security architecture is a task protracted in time and an equation with many unknown variables, Ukraine being one of them. On his recent visit to Poland, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke described the present situation as follows: "The United States and NATO expect that the process of NATO enlargement will be careful and gradual. In the end of this year, they will start making decisions on who and how will join.... The talks on Polish membership are already in progress. Poland will become part of the West.... Russia, Ukraine, and other former Soviet republics are destined to play an important and legitimate role in building the security architecture in Europe... The role of Ukraine needs to be defined."

The American diplomat clearly singled out regional components, elements of a new security structure on the continent. However, as we can see, the place of Ukraine — political, not geographical — is yet to be defined.

Meanwhile, we can hear other voices from Moscow. "Preventing the present situation with Warsaw Pact countries from repeating in Russian-Ukrainian relations is a key task of the current policy," stated political scientist S. Grigoryev. He is concerned that the "construction of NATO in Europe is growing by 15-20 percent," while the alliance's military forces are approaching being 500 kilometers from the Russian border.

The strategic role of Ukraine in guaranteeing security in western and southern directions is growing. Hence, Moscow's quite natural desire to keep Kiev within the zone of its influence. The partnership and cooperation, including in military-technical areas, between our two great countries also appears natural.

On the other hand, how are we supposed to develop this partnership when at all levels, from KVN [name of a popular television entertainment program] to the KPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation], we can hear statements that an independent Ukraine is some temporary phenomenon, a historical nonsense. Tactical nuclear weapons were brought out of Ukraine without any compensation; the zero option gave it zilch from the common Soviet pie, and it incurred billions [currency not specified] in energy supply debts. Is this a basis on which to establish mutually beneficial cooperation?

Trust, but verify — this was President Reagan's most popular proverb during his meetings with Moscow leaders. The idea is not new, but doubly important during the selection of strategic directions for one's policies at a time when the romanticism of neophytes supporting a pan-European home is transforming into the pragmatism of upholding one's own interests.

National Affairs

Ukraine: BSF Air Regiment Relocating From Crimea to Poltava

MM0103142996 Moscow TRUD-7 in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 11

[Report by Aleksandr Chepalov: "No Time For Service — Let's Get Ourselves Settled" — from the "Ukrainian Edition" section]

[FBIS Translated Text] Poltava — The division of the Black Sea Fleet has affected not only warships but also an air regiment formerly based in the Crimea and designed to deter the U.S. Navy in the Mediterranean. Under the agreement between Ukraine and Russia around 20 heavy missile-carrying bombers are now being relocated from the Crimea to near Poltava. The first military Tupolevs have already arrived at their new base. The trip was a piece of cake for them — after all, these aircraft are able to cover a distance of 4,000 km without refueling and can carry four tonnes of munitions, including three missiles.

Guards Colonel V. Vereskul, the regimental commander, stated that the missile-carrying bombers that have arrived are in good technical condition. They were manufactured six years ago in Kazan and have essentially stood "idle" all that time. It is no military secret that the Crimea-Poltava aviation subunit has as yet no specific mission apart from getting its men and equipment settled into the new conditions. So the pilots should have plenty of time left for the charming young ladies of Poltava.

Ukraine: Chief of Staff Reportedly Dismissed in Dispute With Shmarov

MM0103155296 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 1 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Georgiy Dolzhenko under "Scandal" rubric: "Power Men Fall Out and Lopata Is Sent Into Retirement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — Nowadays nobody is surprised by all kinds of scandals. But the one that broke out within the Ukrainian Defense Ministry and which had connotations of a plot has forced people to sit up and take notice. After all, they are power men! They are not to be trifled with.

Initially instructors at the Ukrainian Armed Forces Academy and then a conference on the problems of the Ukrainian national Army's organizational development heard information that, unbeknown to Defense Minister Valeriy Shmarov, an underground group had been formed in their ministry and is elaborating a project for the Army's global reform in a country residence, without the chief of the federal staff's participation. Moreover, this was portrayed as an attempted military coup and the determined destruction of the state's defense capability.

It emerged that the reason for the discord was a differing vision of the Army's structure. The defense minister favors the scrapping of the three present military districts and the creation of seven territorial operations administration structures. A. Lopata, chief of the General Staff, believes that this will only weaken the Army. A row broke out. The upper echelons of power saw the chief of staff's actions as an infringement of state secrecy because he brought national Security Council materials into the public domain. The president's edict dismissing Lopata and approving Deputy Defense Minister I. Vizhan in his post followed. Lopata will soon reinforce the opposition's ranks of retired generals, which include former Defense Minister K. Morozov and the fairly famous V. Mulyava.

Ukraine: Marchuk Views Prospects for Chernobyl

LD0203233396 Kiev UT-1 Television Network in Ukrainian 1935 GMT 2 Mar 96

[News conference by Ukraine Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station; date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Unidentified correspondent] The development of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station [NPS] over the 10 years that have passed since the accident, has been complicated and in many ways controversial. Decisions to close down the station have been repeatedly taken and canceled. Nevertheless, workers from the nuclear power engineering industry are continuing to work. As much as 127 billion kWh of electricity has been generated by the station since the accident [in 1986] to the value of over $5.5 billion. Much money has been invested and much work done to ensure the normal operation of the station. The personnel are known for stability and high skills. In 1995, the station produced 10 percent more electricity than in 1994. Nevertheless, problems do exist. Therefore, they were the focus of attention of Ukraine's Prime Minister Yevheniy Marchuk, who made a working trip to the Chernobyl NPS to familiarize himself with the everyday living conditions of the station's personnel and visited Slavutich — the power engineering industry workers' town.

Over the past three years alone, the state has spent a total amount of money on eliminating the aftermath of the Chernobyl tragedy which would be enough to finance the construction of 45,000 apartments.

Prime Minister Marchuk was studying in-depth prospects for the reorganization of the nuclear power engineering industry, the level of the station's safety, and the social problems facing its personnel.

Marchuk summed up the results of his working trip at a news conference.

[Marchuk] Since 1992, more than 5 percent of all spending from the Ukrainian state budget has been directed to the Chernobyl program. Everybody knows this. Expressed in dollars, the sum is equivalent to over $600 million per year. In other words, the budgetary spending for the elimination of the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident alone amounted to $3 billionn in the period from 1992 till 1995, to say nothing about other payments connected with people's illnesses, medical treatment, and so on.

What is that sum worth? That money would be enough to build about 2.7 million square meters of housing, which is approximately 45,000 flats, or to commission a hospital with 16,000 beds.

Furthermore, over the period of five years, to be more precise, over the period I have just mentioned, the expenditure for the Chernobyl program, listen carefully, exceeded by 400 percent the volume of expenditure for culture and health protection. Not a single country, including Russia, is facing the problem of spending 400 percent more budgetary funds [for Chernobyl] than for culture and health protection. This has been done and will be done.

By this I would only like to emphasize the following: when they put forward a whole number of arguments in favor or against decommissioning the Chernobyl NPS and mention the sum required for that purpose — $2 billion, $4 billion, and so on — they only have in mind purely technical aspects which are directly related to the Chernobyl NPS. But I have mentioned the figures and the percentages that are not directly related to the station itself. And we shall have to continue spending very large sums in order to proceed with the elimination of the aftermath of the Chernobyl tragedy.

The 1996 budget envisages an allocation of 170 trillion karbovantsi for the elimination of the consequences of the Chernobyl accident in 1996.

We have the moral right to raise this question not just before Russia or any other country but before the entire world, because Ukraine suffered most of all and Ukraine has spent and will continue spending more funds than any other country.

If the issue of solving the problem of the Chernobyl nuclear power station is delayed, we shall find ourselves in a situation where we shall be forced to solve the problem independently, whether or not they render us assistance. If the issue is further protracted, we shall reach the point where we shall be forced not to listen to anyone but act in line with the laws of physics rather than the laws of politics. [passage indistinct]

Therefore, I would like the residents of Slavutich to know that Slavutich is Ukraine's child, in the sense that we shall continue investing large sums in the development of Slavutich, no matter how the problem of the Chernobyl nuclear power station is solved. This is a unique phenomenon. There is no such a new town anywhere else in Ukraine or in the CIS, which would have such demographic indicators and whose people would demonstrate such an optimism and ability not just to find ways out of the difficult, tragic situation but overcome any difficult, complicated and even tragic situation through joint efforts. To a certain extent, Slavutich is a symbol of our ability to overcome any crisis, even the one we are facing at present.

This is why I would like to repeat that Slavutich will be developing despite anything and the state will be rendering maximum assistance towards that end.

After all, I would propose the G7 leaders to arrive at Slavutich directly from Moscow, either on board a special aircraft or on board their personal aircraft, and take their final decision here, in this hall, or in any other place. However, I would like to say again that no final decision on Chernobyl can be made without the Chernobyl station personnel, particularly without the people who live and work here. I would be a sin to take any decision, no matter how difficult that decision might be, ignoring their opinion. It cannot be ignored in any way.

The nuclear power engineering industry showed itself as a reliable, stabilizing and supporting industry in the state as a whole. When there was a fall in the production of electricity, the nuclear power engineering industry was functioning properly and, as a matter of fact, came to the rescue of the state at that difficult time.

With the capacity installed at 25 percent, nuclear power stations were producing about 40 percent of electricity in winter time and throughout 1995. By the way, in France nuclear power stations produce 68 to 70 percent of electricity.

We have uranium in ample quantities, enough to last for many years to come and we have a mine and a chemical plant for enrichment. There is cooperation with Russia - as you know, we now receive nuclear fuel partially as compensation for the nuclear strategic weapons - [words indistinct] will soon be completed - and we buy some.

Recently, there was a tender for building or, to be more precise, we are now working on the creation of our own, Ukrainian, cycle for the production of nuclear fuel. It is true, however, that we cannot cope with the task on our own. Therefore, cooperation with foreign firms will be required. There are many contenders, but Russia is the most serious one. There are other firms as well. Russians won the tender. Besides, there are quite a few organizational issues.

Therefore, Ukraine is not going to cope with the task independently. However, we are quite able to solve the problem through cooperation. Moreover, we are not just able to solve it but we are obliged to do so, because the fact that nuclear power stations produced 40 per cent of electricity during the serious crisis showed that nuclear power engineering industry has no alternative, as you have said. We have an alternative because we have reserves of coal enough to last approximately 500 to 600 years. However, from the point of view of all other accompanying issues, the nuclear power engineering industry is much more profitable.

The electric power station itself, as a business, let us say so, or an electricity generating facility, supplies its product to a large sum but cannot afford simple things, like buying required machinery, equipment, instruments or just financing repair work. But this situation cannot last forever because nuclear power engineering is a specific industry which differs from all other industries. This means that the state should create other conditions, enabling these facilities, these electric power stations to earn money in order to ensure their safety, first and foremost. In other words, this is the question of changing the current situation, changing the form of managing the nuclear power engineering industry as a whole. The situation can no longer remain unchanged. And everything will be decided in the near future - the final decision will be made in March.

First and foremost, we must clear up whether or not the Chernobyl nuclear power station poses any threat to the world. I believe that it poses no threat at all. Simply, a deterrent phenomenon, as they say in Russian, has been left.

Ukraine: Crimean Prime Minister Views Economic Potential

LD0203175196 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1500 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Simferopol — On 1 March, Crimea's Prime Minister Arkadiy Demydenko spoke at a sitting of the All-Crimea Assembly of the Republic's Association of Former Employees of Secret Services "Unity [Ukrainian: Yednist]." This was Demydenko's first public speech in the capacity of the autonomy's prime minister.

He believes that the economic situation in Crimea is worse than in the rest of Ukraine because "the peninsula has become the most politicized region in the state where, on top of that, the crime rate is growing significantly — the "fifth" power [organized crime] is trying to impose its conditions".

However, the Crimean prime minister expressed conviction that the autonomy has "serious prospects and potential" and can become a "self-sufficient region." He believes that the government should do all it can to step up control over the use of budgetary funds and tighten up discipline within the executive power bodies. He believes that large sums are being squandered and a lot of money has been misappropriated over the past few years.

The prime minister said Crimea had priorities that were worth special attention: The oil industry, the power engineering industry, and ports. He is convinced that investments should be made in those industries, first and foremost.

Touching on the political situation, the prime minister said that "the interests of Ukraine, Russia, Turkey, and other states have met each other on the peninsula." In Demydenko's opinion, "if these states do not stop playing the Crimean card, the consequences could be disastrous".

Ukraine: Tatar Group Holds Congress, Criticizes Kiev's Policy

LD0303182396 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 1700 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There will be no stability in Crimea in the near future, largely because of Ukraine's policy, Eredzhep Khayredinov, central council chairman of the Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement, told its 5th congress on 2 March. The organization, with some 1,000 members, is the radical wing of the Crimean Tatar National Movement, and is not officially registered. Its main objectives are the establishment of a political and legal system in Crimea to guarantee the Crimean Tatar people's right to self-determination, the revival and development of their spiritual values, wider representation in the government, and guaranteed involvement in privatization.

Ukraine: Tatars Urge Affirmation of Crimean Autonomy

WS0403112696 Kiev INTELNEWS in English
0054 GMT 4 Mar 96

[By Lilia Budzhurova, "Special to INTELNEWS"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Simferopol, March 3 — Crimea's Tatar ethnic group allied itself strongly with Ukrainian nationalism over the weekend, holding an organizational meeting in which they called for reconsideration of the peninsula's autonomous status.

Crimea, with its overwhelmingly ethnic Russian population, was home to the Tatars until they were deported to Central Asia more than 50 years ago by the Soviet regime of Joseph Stalin.

Since the breakup of the Soviet state, they have returned by the hundreds of thousands, many to face homelessness and dire poverty.

"Stability does not seem to be coming to Crimea," said Tatar National Movement leader Eredzhen Khairedinov. "Kiev does not understand that it is cheaper to solve the Crimean Tatar problem than not to solve it."

He requested "quotas for Crimean Tatars in the Parliament of Ukraine," as well as a "review of the status of Crimean autonomy, which is a Russian statehood on Ukrainian territory."

The Tatar National Movement organization, which held its fifth congress Saturday, was formed in 1989 in Uzbekistan, uniting numerous active groups of Crimean Tatars demanding return to their homeland.

The organization is the largest political grouping to be represented in the Majlis, or Tatar national assembly. Its first chairman was Mustafa Dzhemilev, who now heads the Majlis.

Enver Kurtiev, Crimean Parliament deputy and member of the National Movement's central council, called upon Tatars to make up for displacement by the peninsula's Russian majority by doing their utmost to see to it that "every Crimean Tatar family should have at least five children."

Economic Issues

Ukraine: Kuchma Decree Grants Coal Mines Independent Status

WS0403104296 Kiev INTELNEWS in English
0310 GMT 2 Mar 96

[Report by Natalia Petiakh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, March 1 — The first Ukrainian mines became legally independent on Friday, in accordance with President Kuchma's recent decree to restructure the coal mining industry.

The State Committee on the Coal Industry began granting legal status to mines as part of last week's agreement between government and striking coal miners, who insisted on industry independence as a condition of their strike settlement.

Independent status was granted to 19 mines and all of Ukraine's 224 mines will eventually receive the same status, according to the State Committee.

Coal Minister Serhiy Polyakov said, "Now the miners must learn to count money, because if they had provided their own leadership earlier, then they themselves could have dealt with the costs of technological maintenance and sales.

"At every mine there will be a different price structure for coal, and under such market conditions it's possible that some mines will become bankrupt," he added.

According to the head of the Independent Trade Unions of Miners of Ukraine, Mykhailo Volynets, miners' collectives will need subsidies of about KBV [karbovantsi] 300 trillion to develop their production levels.

However, as Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk said this week when visiting the nation's coal mines, "The assistance is to be given not to the branch in general, but to certain mines under the coordination of city administrations."

Ukraine: Cabinet Approves Decree To Step Up Privatization

WS0403112496 Lvov INFOBANK in English
1005 GMT 4 Mar 96

[From the "News Service" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has approved a decree providing for the acceleration of privatization. This decree provides for the drawing up of juridical documents which will ensure unlimited circulation of privatization certificates in Ukraine and protection of property rights of Ukrainian citizens holding a certain portion of national property.

In addition, the decree provides for an increase of properties subject to mandatory privatization. The Ukrainian State Property Fund is obliged to foresee the sale of all shares of enterprises which are subject to privatization and are not strategically significant for the state. The decree envisages privatization certificates as a main means of payment.

Ukraine: Nuclear Plant Chief Explains Factors Behind Success

AU0103214096 Kiev URYADOVYY KURYER in Ukrainian 27 Feb 96 p 7

[Interview with Volodymyr Kostyantynovych Bronnykov, general director of the Production Association "Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Plant," by Vitaliy Chepizhko; place and date not given: "The Future of Power Engineering Is With the Consumer Market"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **The "Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Plant" Production Association is one of the leading enterprises in Ukraine's power engineering branch. Despite the difficult economic situation in which our state has found itself — the energy crisis and the problem of nonpayments — electricity produced by our nuclear plant accounted for 18.5 percent of all electricity produced by Ukrainian electric power plants; this means almost one-fifth of all the kilowatt/hours generated. Over recent years, the production association has created 9,000 jobs and completed the building of and commissioned with its own funds the sixth power unit. This is a result of the well-considered policy pursued by the plant leadership to emerge from the difficult situation and proceed to a market economy.**

[Chepizhko] Volodymyr Kostyantynovych, how has the association succeeded to achieve such results in our difficult economic time? It is no secret that, figuratively speaking, nuclear power engineering has one foot in the grave.

[Bronnykov] To begin with, the work of the nuclear plant depends primarily on the people who work there. As of 1992, we no longer have an infrastructure to support the people, and the social sphere has almost ceased to exist.

We had no choice but to create a new a system of infrastructures to support nuclear production and personnel. By that time, the situation was such that building enterprises immediately turned their backs on us and we were deprived of the services of plants that manufactured spare parts and of support of agriculture. Of course, under such conditions, the standard of living of our workers went drastically down. Inflation is eating up our savings. We started looking for a way out. The first thing we did was persuade the Ukrainian Government and the State Property Fund to give us three enterprises. One of them was the optional equipment plant that could manufacture technological spare parts. The leadership of the enterprise came to us and offered its services. At our own expense, we started restoring production, and we are now convinced that we will have our own containers to store radioactive waste. Apart from that, an assembly and renovation repairs line for special spare parts that are manufactured abroad was opened at that enterprise. In this manner, we created — or renewed, call it what you want — our first thousand jobs.

The second enterprise is a large panel building combine. We restored its working capacity and found it possible to build housing for our workers and, once again, kept jobs going.

The third enterprise was a plant for special building structures that had by that time almost fallen apart. The nuclear plant continued to build the sixth power unit and needed services of the industry that manufactured building materials. The restoration of the enterprise working capacity made it possible to provide the plant with reinforcement cables, which are necessary to ensure safety of the hermetically sealed casings.

Thus, we restored the infrastructure that a nuclear plant must have and maintained and increased the number of jobs.

Our next step was to complete the building of the sixth power unit. We proved to the leadership of our country that we are capable of commissioning the power unit at our own expense. When the moratorium was imposed upon the construction, we discussed the situation and decided that we would take the financing upon ourselves. It is true though that we had to reduce the financing of the social sphere, but there is confidence that, in the future, an increase in the production capacities will, owing to profits and competitiveness of our enterprises, make it possible to complete the program for social provision.

Perhaps, we are idealizing the situation somewhat. The economic crisis has turned out to be too deep, and we are, in fact, producing electricity for free. However, we have a new power unit that will operate for at least 10 years if there is technical support, and will, sooner or later, give us solid profit.

[Chepizhko] Volodymyr Kostyantynovych, every reactor has a certain limited service life. Over the period of its functioning, it must "earn" capital that will make it possible to decommission it. How long have the Zaporizhzhya Plant reactors worked?

[Bronnykov] Our reactors are meant to have a 30-year service life. Over the period of its operation, the reactor must earn funds that will enable the worn-out mechanisms to be taken out of operation. Our first reactor has worked 12 years, and it will have to be decommissioned 18 years later. This involves very great outlays, and money must be earned now. However, the problem of nonpayments and the low price of electricity do not make it possible to earn the needed sums of money. For normal development, the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Plant needs to sell its products at 2.3 or 2.4 cents per kilowatt/hour — in reality, the Ministry of Power Engineering purchases our entire electricity at 1-1.2 cents per kilowatt/hour, taking into account all barter operations. That is why we have to use up all capital that we earn, without leaving any savings for the future.

[Chepizhko] This, however, may lead to a situation when, in the future, we will not be able to decommission those reactors that have completed their service life or to build replacement capacities, and will remain without atomic power engineering altogether. What way out from such a situation do you envision?

[Bronnykov] This is an extremely complex problem, I would say it may cost us many billions [of karbovantsi]. It is mainly associated with the problem of nonpayments. We realize that the economy of the state is a difficult situation. That is why we proposed our own vision of emergence from the situation. We propose that a consumer market be created — such chains that will be suitable for investing in. We are ready to sell our electricity for another five years at 1.5 cents per kilowatt/hour to those enterprises that have investment programs for emerging upon the domestic market, enterprises, whose products will sell and not rot in warehouses. We will sell our products to such enterprises in accordance with differential contracts, but, five years later, the enterprise must return the loan that we granted. Clearly, to keep track of these processes, there must be financial groups or administrations to see how the contracts or investment programs are being fulfilled. We hope that, under such conditions, the process will be much faster and that the problem of nonpayments will be settled.

Belarus

Belarus: Lukashenka Speech at Moscow University

WS0103124896 Minsk ZVYAZDA in Belarusian 28 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[Speech by Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka at the Moscow State M.V. Lomonosov University on 27 February: "Our Nations Continue To Regard Themselves as One Historic Community"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Lecturers, Students, and Workers of Moscow State University! Friends!

I am sincerely grateful to you for your invitation to deliver a speech at the Moscow State University — one of the world's leading educational and scientific centers. I would like to take advantage of today's meeting with you, Russia's intellectual elite representatives, to share my opinions about problems and prospects of the development of our countries and people.

I think that this meeting will be of interest to you.

We live essentially in one society with you. The states are different, but our people (at least in their overwhelming majority) continue to regard themselves as one historic community. They have the same values, common historic heritage, and — I am sure of that — a common future. Therefore, everything taking place in Russia is treated by us not as foreign events, but as our own, close events.

Understanding this, the leadership of the Republic does everything possible to enable Belarusian citizens to remain in the same information area with you. We receive programs from for Russian television channels. Russian newspapers of different political orientation are being sold at all newspaper stands and are available for readers of all libraries.

Unfortunately, the flow of information in the opposite direction presents quite a different picture. The Russians know far less about Belarus. Besides, the materials printed and reported about us in Russia may often be called not information, but disinformation. Due to this, many in Russia are forming a distorted conception about Belarus, its leaders, and its foreign and domestic policies.

I want to recall that Belarus is a state with a highly educated, hard-working, and peaceful people. We have no ethnic, religious, clannish, and other conflicts, which are tearing many countries apart. Belarus is now one of the very few islets of stability on the post-Soviet territory. I am deeply convinced that the Belarusian people have everything necessary to take a worthy place in the single family of European nations in the near future. However, our country, like Russia, is today in a difficult stage of development.

Among many problems worrying us, I would like to single out that of the direction of development of the Belarusian society. This is both a deeply philosophical and, at the same time, practical question. An answer to this question may influence the choice of strategy of the country's development and, possibly, the future of the nation.

Unfortunately, we, practical politicians, have not yet obtained assistance on this question from science and theory to the degree we require. Instead of a deep assessment of the processes currently taking place, we are usually offered a mechanical transplantation of foreign models to our conditions. Along with this, there flourishes, as people would say formerly, creeping empiricism, a trial and error method. Many politicians think that it is better not to think aboutn what can happen tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, and hope for an accidental stoke of luck.

I am sure that precisely at such crucial moments we have a particular need for blending theory with practice. One cannot bury one's head in the sand and avoid the questions: where are we going, what are we striving for. Now, as never before, there is a need for original deep theoretical studies and scientific-practical elaborations which could provide guidelines for politicians.

I think you will agree that our choice of development paths is not large.

The first option is to fully restore administrative methods in managing the economy, where everything, ranging from a laundry to a factory, belongs to the state. However, a society dominated by bureaucrats, where inventive and talented people cannot freely realize themselves, has already proven its inefficiency.

The second option is to follow, graphically speaking, the "classical" capitalist path of development. In a considerable part of the post-Soviet area, we can observe the primary accumulation of capital with the many negative phenomena characteristic of this path. If such a trend persists, then people will be forced to go through all the horrors of "wild" capitalism, which was forgotten long ago by the nations that are prospering today.

I am sure that both these options are unacceptable to us.

Belarus, possessing a great intellectual potential, well-developed infrastructure, industry, and agriculture, is able to create a society in which:

— state property coexists harmoniously with private property; entrepreneurship is encouraged; the majority of the population is middle class;

— the state creates the ondition for a worthy life for pensioners, disabled people, and other socially vulnerable categories of citizens;

— the state ensures the security of honest citizens and keeps criminals in places where they should be kept;

— personal rights and freedoms are connected with a responsible attitude of citizens toward their duties.

Some call it a society of a socially oriented market economy, other call it market socialism. The point, however, is not in the name, but in the basic characteristics of such a society.

It is quite obvious that it cannot be formed by itself alone (at least, in a short historical period). The fulfillment of this task is possible only for a powerful state authority that operates reasonably, quickly, and efficiently.

I am sure that the state today should primarily resolve the following problems: to bring law and order to all social spheres; to ensure the security of its citizens; and to implement reforms.

When I speak about order, I have in mind primarily the economy. Over the last one and a half years, we have managed to take control of the situation.

A macroeconomic stabilization has been achieved in the Republic. Inflation has been suppressed and is now under control. The exchange rate of the national currency has remained stable for more than a year. The production of basic oil refining products and mineral fertilizers has increased. The power engineering industry and a number of other branches are working steadily. We have a significant positive trade balance with countries of the far abroad. In contrast to many countries that appeared on the territory of the Soviet Union, Belarus has prevented disintegration of agricultural production.

Wages and pensions, when evaluated in hard currency, have become more weighty and are being paid basically on time. Apartments are being supplied with electricity and heat.

However, all this is seen by the presidential team as being only the beginning of a great process. It is impossible to strengthen and develop positive trends in the economy and social sphere without implementing deep and comprehensive reforms.

I am much criticized for the slow rate of economic reforms. In my opinion, however, fuss and haste are out of place here.

The central issue of the reforms is a question of ownership. The ability of politicians and authorities to ensure social justice and a worthy life for their residents can be measured by how they resolve this question.

Privatization for us is not a goal in itself. I proceed from the assumption that after being privatized, an enterprise should work better than before. Reforms should improve people's life not in decades, but considerably sooner. If this does not take place, then one must consider whether the reforms are appropriate and whether they are implemented appropriately.

We in Belarus have managed to prevent the national property from being robbed under the guise of reforms. Therefore, we have all possibilities for civilized privatization. A program of measures to reform the property sphere has already been signed by me and is being implemented.

I realize that by having put an end to robbing the national property, I provoked hatred toward me from those who divided up the national wealth in advance. I am sure that the wave of slurs on me in domestic and foreign media has primarily been caused by the fact that I curbed "reformist robbers." Regardless of any pressure exerted on me, I will not allow the "grabatization" of the economy by thieves and swindlers.

Attracting foreign investment is an indispensable element of the economic reforms. Over the last year, we have taken a number of serious measures to achieve a breakthrough in this sphere.

I have held a number of meetings with very prominent businessmen from different countries, primarily the United States, Germany, and France. They were really serious businessmen with billions at their disposal. They count on long cooperation with our country and, what is most important, are ready to invest considerable assets in the development of the Belarusian economy.

Cooperation with such people will be beneficial for everybody, for all of the Republic.

The issue of land ownership arises inevitably here. A big foreign investor, no matter whether he is from the West or Russia, would like to own that land on which he is going to build his enterprise. As for our legislation, it allows only leasing land for 99 years.

I support selling land plots for large investment projects that are needed by our country.

At the same time, I am categorically against selling land on a large scale and transforming it into an object for profiteering.

I am sure that the reforms in Belarus, like in Russia, may succeed only if a single economic complex is maintained. You know that Belarus was a peculiar assembly shop of the Soviet Union, primarily in the high tech sphere. Many major production lines were created to produce for the Soviet and, primarily, Russian market.

The maintenance of specialization and cooperation established over decades will help us preserve both assets and jobs. I am all the time persuading the Russian Government not to organize alternate production capacities. For example, there is a major tractor plant in Minsk which was intended to satisfy the needs of the Soviet Union. Why does Russia have to spend huge sums for creating its own production if we are able to fully provide it with wheeled tractors?

I want to say that over a year, I and Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] have resolved all basic questions in this sphere. Major economic agreements are being signed within the framework of the present visit.

However, fundamental agreements should be reinforced by laborious everyday tasks at various levels.

We also do not forget about domestic investment resources. Over recent years, this source of modernizing the economy was used in an extremely unsatisfactory manner. Banks invested in industry and agriculture very weakly, limiting themselves to speculative operations. We had to urgently bring order and take radical measures in this sphere, too.

With the aim of ensuring the inflow of the population's assets for investments in the economy, we have created a very reliable savings bank on the basis of the Savings Bank and a big commercial bank.

By forming a multistructured and socially oriented economy, the Belarusian Government strives to prevent social injustice and protect ordinary people.

I have been, and remain, a firm supporter of a strong social policy. Over the years of Soviet authority, our people became used to a high level of social protection from the state. The authorities should do everything in order not to disappoint people's hopes. The experience of many countries testifies to the fact that social guarantees and a market economy are quite compatible with each other.

It is impossible to maintain the Soviet social support system, which was based on energy resources practically free of charge. Therefore, we have begun to create a new system of social protection. This system will protect those citizens who are not able to support themselves due to age, health, or other reasons. The work in this direction has already been begun. The executive powers have taken measures to support students and young people, as well as to protect maternity and childhood — in short, those on whom the future of the country depends. At the same time, I decided to cancel the overblown system of benefits and to take other measures which were unpopular but inevitable in the present conditions.

As I have already said, one of the main tasks today is to protect citizens from crime.

I am firmly assured that we can curb crime. Even now the state has powerful law enforcement bodies.

However, the efficiency of combating crime is determined in many aspects by interaction of law enforcement bodies of all CIS countries.

Today criminals are still a step ahead of us: a "single criminal area" has already been created on the territory of the bygone Soviet Union, while a "single legal area," which is to counteract the former, is still being formed. This is particularly acutely felt in Belarus, which is located at a European crossroads.

Due to their geopolitical location, the Belarusian people are interested in achieving mutual understanding and developing cooperation between states of our region in the entire spectrum of security issues.

Unfortunately, now, after the end of the Cold War, a new, real threat of splitting Europe is emerging in connection with NATO expansion to the east. Belarus, like Russia, does not see any reasonable arguments that could justify this process. In our opinion, one cannot divide European nations and states into several sorts. Not a military-political bloc with a limited number of participants, but the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, which unifies all members of the European family of nations, can and should become a basic structure for maintaining peace and stability on our continent.

We pin great hopes, connected with supporting peace and resolving international problems, on the United Nations, an organization founded by our Republic, among others.

The development of relations with Russia, was, is, and will be an unconditional priority of Belarus' foreign policy. Inasmuch as my inclination toward the idea of Belarusian-Russian rapprochement and a union of fraternal Slavic people is interpreted in many ways, I would like to present my fundamental view on this question.

I am sure that the state's foreign policy should be pursued in accordance with the people's will, as well as should serve the interests of man and citizen, and not those of a bunch of politicians.

The Belarusian people more than once expressed their will regarding integration with Russia. Thus, in 1994, the majority of the population supported my political program which envisioned rapprochement with Russia. In the referendum in May 1995, our people once again confirmed their preference for the idea of a Belarusian-Russian rapprochement.

Being a democratically elected president, I am obliged to, and I will, execute the will of my electorate.

Now let us pose the question: does the Belarusian-Russian rapprochement suit the interests of the citizens of both our states? Yes, undoubtedly!

I will quote only one example — the abolishment of customs checkpoints at our borders. From the very beginning, I deemed it inadmissible and offensive for both the Belarusians and Russians to undergo customs control and stand in line while crossing the border.

I saw how people were glad when last year I and Viktor Stepanovich [Chernomyrdin] removed a customs checkpoint pole at the border.

I will continue to do everything in order to make the foreign policy of our Republic beneficial to Belarusian citizens and to prevent it from being a hostage to group interests.

Interstate integration is the main direction in developing international relations at the end of the 20th century.

It cannot be considered normal that on the eve of the third millennium, when the leading countries of North America and Europe are integrating, we are tearing apart the ties that have been established over centuries.

The Soviet Union in its time underestimated European integration. Many of you surely remember how they in the Soviet Union berated the Common Market, which has today become a driving force for a European breakthrough into the 21st century.

Now the West, as it seems to me, makes the same mistake by viewing suspiciously integration processes within the CIS, particularly the Belarusian-Russian rapprochement.

Journalists must not frighten one another by either the loss of sovereignty or by the restoration of the Russian empire or the Soviet Union.

The rapprochement between Belarus and Russia will take forms adequate to the modern realities. I see the model in the European Union, which provides the possibility to reasonably combine integration with sovereignty of nations. Integration should be primarily implemented in the interests of ordinary people.

Today, I and Boris Nikolayevich signed the statement on further Belarusian-Russian rapprochement. We have full mutual understanding with regard to our joint movement forward along the path of integration. You should not doubt that we will justify the expectations and hopes of our nations.

While strengthening integration ties with Russia, our state is dynamically developing relations with other states, primarily neighboring ones. We are actively developing cooperation with Ukraine, Lithuania, and Poland. We are interested in expanding contacts with the European Union and its member states. In my opinion, we have good prerequisites for developing cooperation, primarily of economic nature, with China, the United States, and other big countries.

I am dwelling on this in detail, since there an opinion exists that for Belarus the union with Russia means isolation from the rest of the world. On the contrary, I am convinced that precisely in union with Russia will our Republic take a worthy place in the global community of nations sooner and more assuredly.

While speaking here, at Moscow State University, I cannot but talk about our educational system and science, which were our national pride over decades. Now they find themselves in a difficult situation.

However, I categorically reject the idea, popular among some Russian reformers, that the higher education and science sphere should be privatized and maintained by donations from benefactors.

In my opinion, this is one more unreasonable attempt to mechanically transplant to our conditions the experience of the United States, which has a stable socioeconomic system and private funds amounting to billions.

In our conditions, such a "reform" means death to education and science. And this, in turn, means the loss of the future by the nation.

As of today, only the state can, and should, support education and science. We give freedom to both private initiative and philanthropy in this sphere, but the basic responsibility for maintaining and developing the intellectual potential of the nation is borne by the state; I will say even more — personally by the state leaders.

Realizing this, I see the issues of supporting education and science as one of my priority tasks in the post of president, the head of state.

We have adopted a number of resolutions which should guarantee social justice in the sphere of education. I personally stepped in and did everything so that last year's admission to Belarusian higher educational institutions was conducted proceeding from students' abilities and independently from the fatness of their parents' wallets.

The president has established a system of stipends which, on one hand, ensures a certain subsistence minimum for every student and, on the other, materially stimulates good progress in studies.

Realizing that there should not be any leveling out, we have established a presidential fund for supporting young talents.

We realize very well that the future of both Russia and Belarus is in developing science-intensive production capacities and in implementing modern technologies in all branches of the national economy. Incidentally, even in Soviet times, our Republic never sponged on Russia's scientific sphere. We are basically maintaining our scientific potential even now. However, life itself demands more intense cooperation between CIS states, primarily between Belarus and Russia in the sphere of education and science.

My speech is coming to an end.

Please accept my ardent thanks for your invitation. It is a great honor for me to speak at the Moscow State University. This day will be memorable for me as both a politician and man. Your university is not simply a leading educational institution in Russia. It is also an entire epoch in Russia's history, and in our history as well.

We remember well the great role played by the Moscow State University, as well as its graduates and professors, in creating the higher education and academic science system in Belarus. And we do not forget the names of the Belarusians who worked fruitfully in Moscow State University.

Today it depends on us and you whether the tradition of friendship and cooperation of many years will be broken, or whether it will be given new life.

I ask you to actively join the case of Russian-Belarusian integration. Together we will overcome difficulties and enter the third millennium as prosperous states, able to guarantee peace, democracy, security, and well-being for our people.

Submitting my opinions to your judgment, I hope that you will understand the emotional character of their presentation. The questions which I touched upon today are very important for the future of our countries.

Thank you for your attention.

Moldova

Moldova: Joint EU-Moldovan Committee Discusses Cooperation

AU0103194796 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 1930 GMT 29 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau 29/02/1996 (BASA-press) — The European Union-Moldova Joint Cooperation Committee began its works in Chisinau today.

European Union experts headed by Klaus Schneider, deputy chief of the Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus Division of the European Commission (DG-1A), will discuss further development of scientific and trade relations with Moldovan counterparts.

Moldovan Premier Andrei Sangheli opened the meeting saying that the agreements with the EU represent a recognition of Moldova's success on the reform path and an encouragement for Chisinau to continue efforts to erect a state ruled by law.

"In conceptual respect, the governmental policy pursues three basic goals: further development and consolidation of achievements recorded at macroeconomic level, reduction of disparity between achievements at macrolevel and microlevel by raising production," said Sangheli.

According to him, the achievement of these objectives confronts extremely harsh conditions. It is characterized by an over 60 percent decrease in gross domestic product and weakening of the productive sector starting with 1990, which brought about large-scale unemployment and cut incomes to 50 percent of the minimum consumer basket.

He appreciated the European Community's humanitarian assistance and preferential credits. He said "without them Moldova might undergo social unrest."

The premier particularly thanked for the European Commission's help to settle the Dniester conflict and the problem of withdrawal of the Russian troops temporarily stationed in Moldova.

Sources from the Economics Ministry told BASA-press earlier that Moldova's foreign trade with the EU rose 1.9 times in 1995 to the level of $201.4 million. Moldova's exports to the EU stood at $86.2 million, while imports at $115.2 million. The EU accounted for 12.8 percent in Moldova's trade in 1995.

Moldova: Tiraspol Tribunal Starts Proceedings Against Grachev

AU0303183196 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English 2015 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tiraspol, 01/03/1996 (BASApress) — The Dniester-based Russian troops military tribunal started proceedings against the Russian Defence Minister, Gen.Pavel Grachev, today.

The tribunal, presided over by Justice Col.Nikolay Tumanov, decided to start proceedings under the Russian Penal Code which provides punishment for "failure to carry out a judicial ruling." The Minister is accused of failing to carry out the previous court ruling to reinstate Col.Bergman as Tiraspol garrison commander. The file was sent to the Russian Principal Military Prosecutor to conduct a preliminary inquest.

Earlier, the tribunal had overruled the Russian Defence Minister's order of Col.Bergman's discharge. Grachev's representative at the trial stated he would appeal in a higher court.

Mikhail Bergman, one of the staunchest supporters of the former 14th Army commander, Gen.Aleksandr Lebed, was dismissed from Tiraspol garrison commander in October 1995.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan: Toqayev, Iran's Velayati Discuss Bilateral, Regional Issues

LD0103151896 Tehran IRNA in English 1504 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Almaty, March 1, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and his Kazakh counterpart Qasymzhomart Kemeluly Toqayev explored Tehran-Almaty cooperation and important regional and international topics in their meeting here Friday.

In the meeting, Toqayev referred to the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway project and called it as a major stride in connecting different parts of the region and bringing the hearts of the world people closer.

He said it was among the basic and unalterable policies of Kazakhstan to expand relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The two sides also reviewed measures for restoring peace in the war-torn country of Afghanistan and called for an end to the Afghan crisis.

Velayati is in Almaty on the 4th leg of his Central Asian- Caucasus trip and has already visited the republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The railway linking the Iranian and Central Asian networks through the city of Sarakhs which straddles the Iran-Turkmenistan border, is designed to facilitate economic development in the region and would serve as a connection to the high seas for most of the former landlocked former Soviet republics.

Kazakhstan: President Notes Iran's Help To 'Materialize' Regional Hopes

LD0103140396 Tehran IRNA in English 1345 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Almaty, March 1, IRNA — In a meeting here today with the visiting Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev referred to the growing relations between Tehran and Almaty and said his country will resist the U.S. pressures for trade boycott against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Nazarbayev, calling Iran a "big and important country" and a "neighbour" of Kazahhstan, noted that Iran presents the shortest transit route for his country to reach international waters via the Persian Gulf.

Terming the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway project as a "historic and important step" in linking landlocked Central Asian states with the outside world, he said the valuable efforts of Iran have helped materialize the historical hopes of the regional countries.

The Kazakh president accepted the invitation from his Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani for attending the inauguaral ceremony of the railway project next May, and expressed his country's interest in having multilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Iranian foreign minister who arrived here Friday on the fourth leg of his Central Asian-Caucasus visit, expressed satisfaction over the growing relations between Iran and Kazakhstan, and said that cooperation between the two countries would pave the way for further peace and security in the region.

Towards the end of the meeting Velayati invited the Kazakh authorities to take an active part in efforts to promote regional peace and stability.

Earlier, the Iranian foreign minister visited the republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Kazakhstan: Iranian Foreign Minister Ends Visit, Departs for Baku

LD0203111496 Tehran IRNA in English 1037 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati at the end of his one-day official visit to Kazakhstan left Almaty for the Azeri capital of Baku Saturday morning.

The Iranian foreign minister during his stay in Almaty met with Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and Foreign Minister Qasymzhomart Toqayev and discussed bilateral relations. They also exchanged views on key regional and international issues.

Velayati also submitted President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's invitation to President Nazarbayev to attend the inaugural ceremony of Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway line.

The Kazakh president underlined importance of the railway track in improving the regional and international links and welcomed the invitation.

Kazakhstan: Nazarbayev Regards Equality as Key to Integration

LD0103190296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1740 GMT 1 Mar 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Integration is possible only if its participants are equal, President Nursultan Nazarbayev has declared at a conference on Kazakhstan's state policy in Almaty, citing as an example the European Community, where "Luxembourg and the Netherlands are recognized as equal to Germany, France, and other states."

From PB Files: After the Russian-Belarussian summit in Moscow, President Boris Yeltsin disclosed last Tuesday that he had discussed with Alexander Lukashenko "a very important document, the signing of which is planned in March. Possibly, Kazakhstan will join in later. Not revealing the substance of the paper, Yeltsin made it clear that it concerns a set of measures, aimed to strengthen cooperation, first between Russia and Belarus, and then with Kazakhstan. Yeltsin explained that Nazarbayev "has his own approaches" to the problem discussed. "We should meet with him and find a compromise," the Russian leader declared.

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev has stressed in an interview with Interfax that "there can be no talk of confederation with Russia and Belarus," making it clear that "the key to integration is respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and equality in mutual relations," which are "the cornerstone of rapprochement," Tokayev stressed.

"March will be a month of integration," the diplomat said, adding that "active work is under way with Moscow" and "concrete, significant documents, deepening relations between the countries" will possibly be drafted by the end of this month. According to Tokayev, tested models like the European Community will be taken as the basis of integration. "We will go through borrowing some key European integration elements," he said.

Describing integration as "an objective phenomenon," caused "by economic and political factors alike," he noted that economic reforms in Russia and Kazakhstan have coincided in pace and content and that has significantly sped up bilateral integration, making it simpler.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan: Rakhmanov Regrets World Bank Caution Over Credits

LD0103223396 Dushanbe KHOVAR in Russian 1100 GMT 1 Mar 96

["World Bank and Tajikistan: The Question of Credits" — KHOVAR headline]

[FBIS Translated Text] "We perfectly understand that without your help, the help of the International Monetary Fund, not one developing country, including Tajikistan, could carry out economic reforms properly," President Emomali Rakhmanov, said, receiving Mustafa Ruis, the head of the World Bank mission. At the same time, the head of state expressed his regret over the caution with which these international economic institutions approach the problem of effective cooperation and allocation of credits. Tajikistan has already announced repeatedly to the international community that it is following the path to a democratic, law-governed, and secular state with a market economy. Any delay in providing help could stall the reform process and inflict serious economic damage on Tajikistan. The republic has already started practical realization of principally new programs in all spheres of the economy. Both objective and subjective difficulties are being encountered in the reform process. But we intend to face them and are hoping for concrete help from the IMF and the World Bank, the president said.

Mustafa Ruis expressed satisfaction with the reforms currently underway in the Tajik economy and dwelled on the recommendations of the World Bank, to be taken into account during transition to market relations. The World Bank will look at how well these are being implemented, as well as at the pace, direction, and depth of reforms when considering the question of allocating to the republic so-called "humane" credits to the tune of $55 million over 40 years, interest on which does not have to be paid for 10 years. Representatives of the World Bank in Tajikistan will supervise reform, monitor how far the bank's recommendations are being followed and regularly report back to the World Bank's leaders.

Emomali Rakhmanov, for his part, drew attention to those aspects of the recommendations already carried out, in particular, liberalization of currency and export operations and the reform of agriculture. At this stage of completing transformations, also in other spheres mentioned in the recommendations, the president emphasized that all issues could be solved and that they should now be talking about what forms of assistance will help solve the main burning questions, in particular the issue of looking after pensioners and purchasing pesticides. "Economic reforms put into practice will show our omissions and shortcomings and we hope that the World Bank will help us eradicate them," the head of state said. In the light of this, he asked Mustafa Ruis to consider the question of providing technical assistance to Tajikistan in the nearest future. The sides expressed confidence that cooperation between Tajikistan and the World Bank will be fruitful.

Tajikistan: Government Calls For Continued Talks With Opposition

LD0103181496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1745 GMT 1 Mar 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Galina Gridneva]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, March 1 — Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov on Friday confirmed the peace-oriented line of the Dushanbe policy concerning the dialogue with the armed opposition.

Tajikistan's leaders are "confirming their peace-oriented line for a political solution to the inter-Tajik conflict and call for the unconditional continuation of talks with the armed Islamic opposition," Rakhmanov told Itar-Tass.

Official Dushanbe's "readiness to extend a cease-fire with no limiting conditions for the duration of the negotiating process, as well as its readiness to enable representatives of the Islamic opposition to participate in a special parliamentary session" confirm its peace-loving line, he said.

In a comment on possible circumstances of a delay in signing a peace agreement, he said "the threat of a new jihad will not scare us."

"We have announced our intention to the international community not to use force to solve problems. We are calling on the opposition leaders to repudiate any attempts to exert pressure on us, as it is a hopeless and dangerous way," he said.

Tajikistan: Agreement Signed on Unified Rail Network With Uzbekistan

LD0403112396 Almaty AZIYA-EZH in Russian Feb 96 No 8, p 24

[FBIS Translated Text] In Dushanbe the heads of Tajikistan's railway network and of the state joint-stock railway company, Uzbekistan State Railway Company, have signed a broad agreement on mutual relations. This is the first document of its kind to be signed between two sections of the network since their "divorce" in autumn 1994. The sides agreed to maintain a unified system, the current railway draft rules and unified standards. On order from its Tajik partners, the Uzbek State Railway Company will repair locomotives, refrigerator sections, and railway repair vehicles and will also assist in training personnel. The sides agreed to keep the privileges introduced earlier for railwaymen.

Similar agreements between the railwaymen of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan are currently being prepared.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan: Deal With Russia Could Ease Gas Problems

MM0103125796 Moscow FINANSOVYYE IZVESTIYA in Russian 27 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Vladimir Mikhaylov: "Ashgabat Has Coordinated Future Gas Export Prospects With Russian Interests"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The blueprint for the Turkmenistani gas production industry's development and for its export of energy sources is undergoing significant changes.

A year ago the idea of building a gas pipeline across Iran and Turkey to consumers in Europe formed the basis of Turkmenistan's foreign economic doctrine. An international consortium comprising Turkmenistan, Iran, and Turkey, plus Kazakhstan and Russia, was set up for its construction. The CIS partners have most probably been motivated by a desire to control Turkmenistan's actions in the international energy sources market.

The idea to build a gas pipeline across the country's southern borders was formulated to avoid its dependency on Russia. Gas is Turkmenistan's main raw-material resource. Within the former USSR Turkmenistan was second only to the Russian Federation with regard to gas extraction and resources.

Independence made Turkmenistan one of the world's richest countries in terms of per capita gas resources but did not make it autonomous. The principal gas pipeline from Central Asia to the center ensured that gas was shipped by an absolutely fixed route. This situation suited the Turkmenistani Government until Russia began to include a certain proportion of the Turkmenistani gas in its own gas supplies to Europe.

However, in 1993 Russia abolished this quota. It was proposed that Turkmenistan sell its gas to Ukraine and the Transcaucasus using the existing network of pipelines.

However, the consumers of Turkmenistani gas in the CIS proved to be uncreditworthy. The gas had to be provided on credit without hope of quick payment. The total debt owed to Turkmenistan by its CIS partners for gas deliveries amounts to almost $1 billion.

The idea of building a gas pipeline to Europe bypassing the network of main pipelines that had developed in the Soviet period was warmly supported by those countries through whose territory it was planned that the future gas pipeline would be laid. Turkey calculated that the Turkmenistani gas would cost it less than deliveries from Russia. Iran, which had been isolated as a result of the U.S. economic blockade, figured that, once built, it could connect its gas fields to the pipeline.

However, international financial organizations refused to fund the expensive project (costing in the region of $10 billion) because the key country on the gas pipeline's route was to be Iraq.

At the last moment Turkey — evidently not without pressure being applied by its American partners in NATO — refused to confirm the commitments it had previously made to Turkmenistan guaranteeing the purchase of a significant proportion of gas from the future pipeline. This put in doubt the project's ability to pay for itself quickly.

The impossibility of quickly implementing the "project of the century" absolutely suited Russia. You see it is still to this day Russia that is supplying Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Turkey with gas. In Turkmenistan they tried to forget about the serious failure of their foreign economic initiative and began to talk about a new project to build a gas pipeline to Pakistan via Afghanistan and about an agreement with Iran to build a short gas pipeline to this country's northern regions.

However, the swift change in its orientation has not altered the current economic situation. Turkmenistan still has no guaranteed sources of national income from the sale of its principal raw-material resources.

A new project devised deep within the Turkmenistani and Russian gas production departments did not receive such wide publicity as the "project of the century" and therefore came as a surprise to many people. At the end of 1996 [as published] both countries' governments concluded a package of agreements regulating gas supplies from Turkmenistan to Russia.

In accordance with the new agreements, Russia has agreed to buy 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually from Turkmenistan. The prices in the contract are lower than world prices, but payment has been 100 percent guaranteed. The two countries have formed a joint enterprise, "Turkmenrosgaz," cofounded by the "Gazprom" Russian joint-stock company and the Turkmenistani Ministry of Oil and Gas.

"Turkmenrosgaz" has not only obtained the sole right to prospect for and extract hydrocarbonaceous deposits on the right bank of the Amu Darya but has also gained the right to conduct all mutual settlements for deliveries of Turkmenistani gas to CIS countries.

In 1995 Turkmenistan was forced to artificially reduce gas extraction to a level of around 30 billion cubic meters a year owing to consumers' inability to pay. But now with the prospects that have opened up for cooperation with Russia, it is planned to raise the annual extraction level to 48 billion cubic meters of gas this year.

Armenia

Armenia: OSCE Chairman Expresses Concern on Karabakh Conflict

NC0103180096 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1500 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Flavio Cotti, chairman of the OSCE and Swiss foreign minister, said in a news conference today: We are very anxious about the Karabakh conflict, and we want to assure you that we will do everything to find a solution to this problem. In this context, we value the efforts of the Minsk Group and the bilateral contacts.

Before the news conference, he met with the diplomats representing the OSCE countries in Armenia.

We will provide details on Flavio Cotti's news conference during our next newscasts.

Armenia: Interparliamentary Agreement With Karabakh Detailed

NC0103212596 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1900 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An agreement was signed today between the Armenian National Assembly and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] parliament.

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] The agreement on cooperation between Armenia and the NKR was signed by Babken Ararktsyan, chairman of the National Assembly, and Karen Baburyan, chairman of the NKR parliament.

The Armenian National Assembly and NKR parliament endorsed the need to develop close cooperation between the two republics. According to the agreement, the interparliamentary cooperation will contribute to the deepening and consolidation of the political, economic, scientific, and cultural ties between Armenia and NKR.

Agreement was reached to hold periodic meetings between the parliamentary delegations in order to coordinate interparliamentary ties, to forge cooperation between the permanent parliamentary commissions, to organize meetings whenever necessary to discuss bills, to organize the exchange of information on legislative activity, to hold joint discussions to formulate a coordinated approach on international and regional problems of mutual interest, and to organize the exchange of expertise between the parliamentary staffs and of (?training courses). [end recording]

Armenia: Implication of Agreement With Karabakh Viewed

NC0103212696 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1730 GMT 1 Mar 96

FBIS Translated Text] A parliamentary delegation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] is currently visiting Armenia headed by Parliament Chairman Karen Baburyan.

The HAYASTANI HANRAPETUTYUN and AZG papers reported that Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan received the delegation yesterday.

In welcoming the guests, the Republic's President noted the importance of furthering the interstate ties between Armenia and NKR. He also stressed the need for Armenia and Karabakh to coordinate their positions for a peaceful solution to the Karabakh problem and to consult regularly.

Baburyan assured the Armenian authorities that the people of Karabakh have confidence in and will promote the policy Armenia has put forth to solve the Karabakh problem.

Armenian Foreign Minister Vahan Papazyan also received NKR parliamentary delegation on the same day. He emphasized the importance of such meetings to better coordinate positions during the negotiating process aimed at finding a political solution to the Karabakh problem. They also discussed the results of the Helsinki talks held recently under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group. Views were exchanged on the conflicting sides' assessments of the latest proposals aimed at speeding up the Minsk process.

The ARAVOT paper reported that the interparliamentary agreement to be signed today between the highest legislative organizations of Armenia and the NKR was quickly distributed to politicians and the press, eliciting various interpretations.

There could be discussion about a certain change in Armenia's foreign policy direction concerning the Karabakh problem. The NKR parliament is, of course, a legitimate legal body, although it is not formally recognized as the parliament of a country subject to international law. The signing of an agreement with the NKR could be construed as a change in the political line adopted by Armenia.

With regard to the legal aspect of this issue, Armenia's National Assembly has the right to choose its own partners without any prejudice, in this case, between the parliaments of Tataristan and the NKR, which have been lawfully elected by the citizens of these republics.

Armenia: Karabakh's Kocharyan Discusses Policy on Independence

NC0103140096 Yerevan ARAGIL ELECTRONIC NEWS BULLETIN in English 0749 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Stepanakert ("AZG" daily — ARMENPRES), 02/29/96 — RMK [Republic of Mountainous Karabakh] President Robert Kocharyan met with city administration of Stepanakert, leaders of large enterprises and institutions of the republic, to discuss the problems of socio-economic and cultural development of the RMK capital.

Speaking about the topics of permanent policy, Kocharyan assured RMK's course for independence. He touched upon the principles based on which, according to RMK, the conflict should be resolved. He stressed that no side should be subordinate to the other, RMK cannot exist as an enclave, and its security shall be exclusively defined by its people.

President Kocharyan also reported that he plans to meet with acting chairman of OSCE and co-chairmen of Minsk group, who arrived in the region.

Armenia: NKR Foreign Minister Reiterates Policy

NC0103213896 Yerevan Armenia's Radio First Program Network in Armenian 1500 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] Foreign Minister Arkadi Ghukasyan said in a news conference today: We believe that Azerbaijan's position at the talks is not constructive. It is attempting to recover everything it has lost in the war and is speaking from a position of potential force.

Mr. Ghukasyan (?noted) that the NKR is an independent state, and the international community should not only be guided by the principle of territorial integrity but also take into consideration the peoples' right to self-determination.

He also noted that no one group of people could be subordinate to another.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan: Iran's Velayati Arrives in Baku, Inaugurates Trade Fair

LD0203125396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Continuing his tour of Central Asian states, our Foreign Affairs Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in the Azeri capital, Baku, this morning after leaving Kazakhstan.

Upon arriving in Baku, Mr. Velayati, accompanied by the deputy prime minister of Azerbaijan as well as the republic's foreign minister, inaugurated the Iranian trade fair in Baku.

Our correspondent in Baku has a telephone report in this connection:

[Unidentified correspondent] Some 25 Iranian companies are displaying their industrial, medical, and consumer goods at the Baku fair. Before opening the exhibition, our foreign minister said the volume of trade between the two countries during the last year was around $450 million, showing an increase of 123.5 percent over the preceding year.

He stressed: Economic relations between Iran and Azerbaijan suffered from ups and downs to begin with. However, these relations are now developing fast.

Referring to the joint economic commission of the two countries, Mr. Velayati said: This commission is a useful framework for increasing cooperation between the two countries.

Mr. Velayati said the two countries should look to the future of their economic relations. He stressed: Efforts must be made for the achievement of what the two nations both want.

For his part, Izzet Rustamov, Azerbaijan's deputy prime minister, stressed his country's intention to develop economic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. He said: The people of Azerbaijan will never forget the Islamic Republic of Iran's help to this nascent republic, and they will always be grateful.

He added: Visits by Iranian officials to Azerbaijan have always led to the expansion of ties as well as other benefits. The factor of common historical and cultural heritage, furthermore, has always proved conducive to the expansion of these ties.

Azerbaijan: Velayati Meets With Aliyev, Other Officials

Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our country's [Iran's] Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, who is visiting the Republic of Azerbaijan, met that country's president, National Assembly speaker, and foreign minister this evening.

At these meetings, the two sides stressed the need for strengthening and expanding the relations between the two countries in various fields. Let me draw your attention to our colleague's report:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] At Velayati's meeting with Azeri President Geydar Aliyev, [Iranian] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's invitation to attend the inauguration ceremony for the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway was submitted to him. The president of Azerbaijan welcomed the invitation and described the construction of this railway as a successful idea which would benefit other countries, as well as Iran and Turkmenistan. Heydar Aliyev referred to Iran's railway construction capabilities and called for the establishment of an independent [as heard] railway between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran via the border town of Astara.

He also hoped that the concurrence between Velayati's visit today and the opening of an Iranian goods exhibition in Baku would prove to be a turning point in the economic relations between the two countries, and he conveyed his country's willingness to host commercial activities, investments, and trade by merchants from Iran.

At the meeting, Dr. Velayati noted the priority that is attached to Iran's foreign policy to the expansion of ties with neighboring countries, and described the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway construction as one of the most important projects carried out in the framework of cooperation between ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] member countries which, in addition to linking the eight [as heard] member countries to one another, would also establish links between them and the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Oman.

At his meeting with Dr. Velayati today, Rasul Guliyev, the speaker of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan, called for the expansion of cooperation and ties between the two countries.

This is the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran, from Baku. [end recording]

Azerbaijan: Gasanov, Velayati on Regional Peace, Karabakh

LD0203210796 Tehran IRNA in English
1935 GMT 2 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, March 2, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, and the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Hassan A. Hasanov, here Saturday expressed their mutual feelings for an early solution to the problem of Karabakh as a factor contributing to regional peace.

They also discussed topics in relation to the legal regime of the Caspian Sea and agreed that the issue would have to be resolved shortly by the five countries that share the Caspian Sea coasts.

The two sides also expressed mutual interest in broadening bilateral and multi-lateral relations with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Azerbaijan: Gasanov, Iran's Velayati Trade Accusations

NC0303185396 Paris AFP in English
1802 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, March 3 (AFP) — The Iranian and Azeri foreign ministers traded accusations at a press conference here Sunday, Iran accusing Azerbaijan of being too friendly to Israel, while Azerbaijan accused Iran of supporting its enemy Armenia.

The scene appeared to indicate worsening relations between the neighbours, which the visit by Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati to the Azeri capital had aimed to improve.

Although Azeri Foreign Minister Gasan Gasanov said the talks had been very useful and occurred "in a constructive atmosphere," he charged Iran with having stepped up cooperation with Azerbaijan's neighbour Armenia.

Conflict between the two former Soviet Caucasian republics Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh has claimed more than 20,000 lives since it erupted in 1988. A ceasefire was signed in 1994 but no political solution has yet been found.

The Azeri minister said Iranian cooperation had helped Armenia to get round a blockade which Azerbaijan had been trying to impose as part of the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, a largely Armenian enclave inside Azerbaijan.

Hasanov claimed Sunday [3 March] the Armenians had "massacred 30,000 Azeri Shiites" during the conflict, a fact which should worry Iran, he said. Azerbaijan is a largely Moslem society, while Armenia is Christian.

Velayati countered Gasanov's accusations by attacking Azeri-Israeli relations. "Iran wants Azerbaijan to reduce its relations with Israel, which is the enemy of all Moslem states," he said.

"Israel is Iran's greatest enemy," Velayati continued. "We do not wish to see Israeli positions strengthened close to our frontiers and we have made clear to (Azeri) President Geydar Aliyev that we are concerned about this."

Velayati left Sunday for Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, where he will meet President Eduard Shevardnadze Monday.

Azerbaijan: Iran's Velayati Defends Relations With Armenia

LD0303221396 Tehran IRNA in English 2146 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, March 3, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati in a joint press conference here on Sunday with his Azeri counterpart Gasan Gasanov, expressed Iran's concern over expansion of relations between Azerbaijan and the illegal Zionist regime, and said that having relations with "main enemy of Muslims", is not in the interests of either Azerbaijan or the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He took note that the Qods [Jerusalem]-occupying regime, which is backed to the hilt by the U.S., has made no secret of its intense enmity towards the Islamic Republic of Iran, and said that during talks with Azeri officials, he expressed concern over the presence of the Israelis on Azeri soil, so close to the Iranian borders.

"In view of the brotherly relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan this issue would be solved during mutual talks," Velayati expressed hope.

He made the remark following a question posed by the IRNA reporter to Hasanov on Azerbaijan's relations with Israel, to which the latter had replied: "In my view Iran's relations with Armenia should be of more concern to the Iranian people. Armenia has occupied Azeri soil and not Israel."

The Iranian foreign minister drew his Azeri counterpart's attention to Zionist designs in the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and advised him to read Israeli Premier Shim'on Peres' book 'The New Middle East', in order to become more acquainted with Zionist designs on the whole region.

"Israel's expansionist objectives are not limited to Palestine or Iran but include all Islamic countries of the region," he added.

He also replied to Hasanov's comments on the alleged 'breaking of the economic blockade of Armenia by Iran', saying "Armenia shares borders with four countries and at the moment goods are flowing into it from all four neighbours including the Republic of Azerbaijan."

Besides Iran and Azerbaijan, the other two countries sharing borders and trade with Armenia are Georgia and Turkey.

Asked by an Azeri reporter as to why Iran has relations with Armenia when it opposes countries having relations with the U.S. and Israel, Velayati pointed out: "Iran, through its relations with Armenia has been making efforts to pave the way for liberation of occupied Azeri lands.

"No country has made such sincere efforts as Iran in this respect, as was appreciated even by the Azeri president regarding Iran's help to the war refugees and our peace efforts.

"We are ready to continue our efforts (in the Karabakh conflict), and also request the government of Azerbaijan that it is not in its interests to have relations with Israel. We hereby stress that we do not consider this to be in the interests of the Azerbaijan Republic and Iran, because Israel is the enemy of all Muslims."

Velayati reiterated that Iran will spare no efforts for helping the Azeri refugees and preventing aggression on the republic, and said: "Over the past few years Iran has provided the Republic of Azerbaijan with maximum help, and is making efforts to end the Karabakh issue with the liberation of occupied Azeri lands."

Towards the end of the press conference, Velayati referred to the legal regime of the Caspian Sea and underlined the need for continuation of talks in this regard.

He said that during his stay in Azerbaijan it was agreed that following a meeting of experts of the two countries, talks will continue between the foreign ministers of the Caspian littoral countries.

The five countries bordering the Caspian, the world's largest inland sea, are Iran, Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

Velayati left for the neighbouring republic of Georgia tonight at the end of his two-day trip to Azerbaijan.

Georgia

Georgia: Tbilisi Drafts Proposals for Black Sea Fleet Division

LD0103204096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1950 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI, Mar 1 (Interfax) — Georgian Foreign Minister Irakly Menagarishvili believes that Tbilisi has the "logical and legal right to lay claim to its share in the former USSR's Black Sea Fleet."

He said that whereas before Georgia lacked the appropriate conditions, now there were several likely ways of solving that problem. "As soon as our specific proposals are finalized, we shall make appropriate requests to the Russian and Ukrainian leaders," Menagarishvili said.

Asked whether Georgia would be able to maintain its fleet, Menagarishvili said that preserving a military fleet in the classic sense would be no easy task, but that everything depended on the targets set. Georgian experts are now working on those problems, Menagarishvili added.

At the same time, the Georgian Foreign Minister described as premature statements by the Georgian Defense Minister Vardiko Nadebaidze and Naval Commander Aleksandr Dzhavakhishvili that it would be possible to create an integral system of naval fleets of Russia, Ukraine and Georgia, similar to the anti-aircraft defense of the CIS. Menagarishvili believes that the question requires detailed examination.

Georgia: Foreign Minister Confirms Black Sea Ships Claim

MK0203141096 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 2 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Oleg Blotskiy, Temuri Kadzhaya: "Georgia Claims For Itself Part of Black Sea Fleet"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a press conference on 29 February, Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagarishvili reiterated his statement made two weeks earlier that Georgia is bringing the question of handing over to it part of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet up for discussion. Menagarishvili underlined that it is "natural, logical, and legitimate" for Georgia to raise this question. He noted that it would have been better to have raised the question on handing over part of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet three or four years ago, but, as the Georgian minister of foreign affairs thinks, better late than never. Responding to the question "What do you think of the recent statement by the Georgian Defense Minister Vardiko Nadibaidze to the effect that the republic is not raising today the question of handing over to it part of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet?" the foreign minister said that this statement, like other statements, signals the start of discussion of this question in the republic's political and public circles.

The Georgian foreign minister underlined that the question on handing over to it a part of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet will be discussed during meetings with the leaders of Russia and Ukraine. Menagarishvili also pointed to the fact that an understanding has already been reached that Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov will come to Georgia on a special visit. The date of the visit was not given, and Menagarishvili stated that it would be given later. In his words, Primakov's visit to Georgia will be part of the Russian foreign minister's tour of the countries of Transcaucasia.

A Russian Navy press center spokesman told your NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA correspondent that at the moment — 1400 on 1 March — he had no information on this question.

Sergey Dolzhikov, senior officer of the Russian Black Sea Fleet press center, advised the following from Sevastopol: "Such questions come within the jurisdiction of Russia's political leadership, and the Black Sea Fleet press center cannot comment on them."

Irakli Menagarishvili's statement was made precisely at the moment when the commander of the Russian Navy, Admiral Feliks Gromov, was introducing to officers of the Black Sea Fleet their new chief: Vice Admiral Viktor Kravchenko.

Your NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA correspondent has come to learn that the utterances of the Georgian foreign minister draw nothing but incomprehension from the seamen. The explanation lies in the fact that Russian naval ships left Georgia in 1992 leaving to it the entire coastal infrastructure of the Poti naval base, which included docking platforms; structures of shore bases; special buildings; communications; equipped water areas; ship repair facilities, and so on, including housing for seamen, which have now been abandoned by all Black Sea Fleet officers.

It is common knowledge that the cost of the ships of a naval base and the cost of the base proper are approximately in the 30 percent to 70 percent proportion.

Thus, Georgia received in 1992 the greater part, as far as cost is concerned, of the naval assets that were on its territory, precisely those without which ships cannot exist.

The base, however, has been looted, and virtually all of its services have become unusable over the past three years as a result of general license in Poti and civil war. Things reached a point where a trainer ship left behind by Russia simply sank because the locals were periodically stripping off parts made from nonferrous metals.

Quite understandable is Georgia's desire to have its own navy, which would considerably increase the republic's might and enable it to block the territory of Abkhazia from the sea.

The main issue is whether Georgia will be able to maintain its own naval forces; to rebuild the Poti base; and to fully man combat ships with sailors and officers. It is common knowledge that the republic had no naval schools in the years of the Soviet government, nor does it have any today. Talking with the NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA correspondent, one Russian Navy staff officers said literally the following: "You can of course obtain ships by haggling. Only maintaining them would be a problem. Having a navy is a costly pleasure."

Georgia: Georgian, Iranian Foreign Ministers Discuss Ties, Caucasus

LD0303184696 Tbilisi First Program Television Network in Georgian 1700 GMT 3 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati, foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, arrived in Tbilisi from Baku today. Here is a report from our correspondent:

[Unidentified correspondent] The eminent guest from Iran was met at the airport by Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagharishvili; Akbar Uminian, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Georgia; and Dzhemshid Giunashvili, Georgian ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to the Islamic Republic of Iran. From the airport, the guests proceeded to the Metechi Hotel.

In the second half of the day, the two countries' foreign ministers met at the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Menagharishvili said right at the start of the discussion that relations between Georgia and Iran were developing in a businesslike atmosphere and in an air of mutual respect, which was extremely important for further development of cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

The meeting discussed the situation in the Caucasus region. Dr. Velayati said that the explosive Caucasus was a most important region for Iran and, therefore, his country wanted political stabilization and peace in the region. It is significant that Iran has more than once confirmed its unequivocal support for Georgian territorial integrity. The decisions of the CIS summit in Moscow in January on settlement of the Abkhaz conflict were immediately welcomed by Iran. Velayati also said that the conflicts in the Caucasus were hindering the development of multilateral relations between the countries of the Caucasus region and neighboring states.

In Menagharishvili's opinion, the settlement of these conflicts and the implementation of the For a Peaceful Caucasus plan was in the interests of all countries of the region.

The meeting also discussed specific bilateral issues relating to the spheres of transport, energy, industry, and trade.

In conclusion, the foreign ministers exchanged views on the participation of Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze in the inauguration of the Sarakhs-Mashhad railway on the Turkmen-Iranian border in the near future.

The main purpose of this visit by Velayati, foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is to officially invite Shevardnadze to Iran. Tomorrow, Velayati will meet Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.

Georgia: Iranian Foreign Minister Delivers Message to Shevardnadze

LD0403114096 Tehran IRNA in English 1034 GMT 4 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tbilisi, March 4, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati handed over a written message of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia Monday before departing for Kiev, Ukraine.

In his message, President Rafsanjani stressed further boosting of ties between the two countries and invited his Georgian counterpart to attend the inaugural ceremony of the Tajan-Sarakhs-Mashhad railways on May 13.

Welcoming the invitation, Shevardnadze called for expansion of Tehran-Tbilisi cooperation terming last April visit to Georgia of President Rafsanjani as very important in further promotion of ties.

He stressed that Georgia is interested in expansion of ties in all fields.

Praising Velayati's role in upgrading of relations between the two countries, he voiced Georgia's readiness to cooperate with Iran in all areas which may help promote regional stability and tranquility.

The two sides also emphasized following up and implementation of earlier agreements reached between the two countries.

Velayati termed the trend of promotion of bilateral relations as satisfactory saying that the two sides are pleased with the agreements reached between the two nations. He added that grounds are prepared for furthering economic, transporation and political cooperation.

Velayati who arrived here Sunday night left Tbilisi for Kiev after the meeting. The Iranian foreign minister was seen off by his Georgian counterpart Irakli Menagharashvili.

Georgia: Velayati Says Iran Supports Georgia's Territorial Integrity

LD0403121396 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1136 GMT 4 Mar 96

[By Tengiz Pachkoriya]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TBILISI March 4 (Itar-Tass) — Iran supports the principle of Georgia's territorial unity and integrity, Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, who has been here on an official visit, told journalists on Monday.

Mr Velayati said Iran attaches much importance to contacts with CIS countries and that he visited Georgia in a tour of CIS countries. The Minister said that he would then go to Kiev and would visit Russia shortly.

Mr Velayati had a meeting with Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze on Monday morning.

Georgia: Shevardnadze Discusses Economy, Caspian, Abkhazia

LD0403121496 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0802 GMT 4 Mar 96

[Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze regular Monday studio interview by Correspondent Nato Oniani—live; monitored in progress]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Shevardnadze] There has been a breakthrough in tax collection. According to the Tax Inspectorate, 15 million lari worth of tax was collected in February, which is 4m lari more than in January - an increase of 36 per cent. According to preliminary estimates, over 26 million lari worth of tax was collected in the first two months, which is 101 percent of the planned total. This is double the revenue of the first two months of last year. Fulfillment of the plan for VAT collection is especially successful, reaching 108.1 percent.

According to the Finance Ministry's assessment, the Customs Department has failed to meet the forecast for the first two months by 1.5 million lari. This, together with other questions, will be the subject of special debate by the government.

A faster pace of economic improvement will largely depend on the expected improvement in the operation of the energy grid in spring. At the same time, improving the recovery of debts for energy remains a crucial problem. The well-known presidential decree on debt repayment measures has had a certain positive effect. Although it has not yet been possible to recover the planned sums in full, significant results have been achieved. For example, the total sum that Sakenergo [Georgian energy department] received in money and certain material resources from consumers in February was more than double the sum for January or the average monthly sum for preceding periods. This should improve Sakenergo's financial situation.

Nevertheless, according to the latest data from Sakenergo, it is currently owed some 114 million lari for power supplies. Reducing this amount should be the main task for every enterprise manager, every representative to the provinces, head of local administration, and mayor. As I said, a government meeting in the next few days will specially examine the fulfillment of the budget, the recovery of debts for electricity, and the overall economic situation. Efficient and, if necessary, harsh measures will be set out.

As regards the merger of insurance companies, I would like to welcome this event. It will undoubtedly be very important for the development of Georgian business, attraction of foreign investment and, in the end, for the revival of the country's economy.

[Oniani] Mr. President, your meeting with the Iranian foreign minister, held behind closed doors, finished a few minutes ago. We know that Dr. Velayati invited you to the inauguration of the Mashhad-Sarakhs railway in May. There were probably other interesting questions which we do not know about.

[Shevardnadze] I had a very interesting and useful meeting with 'Ali Akbar Velayati, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The main purpose of his visit was to convey to me an invitation from Presidents Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Niyazov [of Turkmenistan] to the inauguration of the Mashhad-Sarakhs railway due in May. I must say that the Iranian president attaches special importance to our meeting during the inauguration of the railway.

Many people may be unaware that the railway was designed by Georgian specialists. Its commissioning will be an important event for the countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Persian Gulf, Turkey, and beyond.

We noted with satisfaction that since the memorable visit to Georgia by the Iranian president, bilateral relations have been developing in a dynamic and upward fashion. We discussed specific projects and agreed to create a legal foundation for our relations, in particular, to prepare an agreement on the prevention of double taxation.

It must be stressed that the Iranian foreign minister reaffirmed his country's active support for Georgian territorial integrity and the establishment of stability and peace in this country.

We also discussed the importance of active joint efforts by the Caucasus region and neighboring countries for a peaceful and stable Caucasus. Iran is ready to take part in this extremely important process.

[Oniani] Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev will visit Georgia at the end of this week. The main issue during the visit will be the transit of early Caspian oil via Georgia. It will probably be a very important visit, because Georgia has been waiting for President Aliyev's arrival for a long time. [passage omitted]

[Shevardnadze] We regard Geydar Aliyev's visit as one of the central events in the country's foreign relations. The visit will strengthen our traditional relations with Azerbaijan and promote further development of brotherly ties between the two countries and peoples in the short- and long-term future.

Our discussion will cover not only bilateral relations, but also the complex situation in the region, the main principles for the establishment of peace in the Caucasus, and some aspects of world politics. One of the most important issues among these will, of course, be the so-called western route for Caspian oil. You know that this issue has already been examined, and we will sign a document of historic importance.

Considering that Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan and I are due to hold a fundamental meeting in the very near future, it should not be hard to guess that the issue of a more active role of the Caucasus itself in the struggle for a peaceful Caucasus is now on the agenda. Of course, our neighbors, primarily Russia, Turkey, Iran, and other countries, will also be involved in it. [passage omitted]

[Oniani] Since the start of the Russian election campaign, some political forces in Russia have been discussing the possibility of the restoration of the Soviet Union. They are discussing it as a real possibility. In your opinion, how realistic is this prospect?

[Shevardnadze] I think that to discuss this issue and, especially, to put it on the agenda is an anachronism. I would like to state that it is time politicians and ordinary citizens realized that any attempts, albeit at a level of slogans, to restore the Soviet Union will be the beginning of the disintegration of the CIS. I think everyone should think deeply about what a possible disintegration of the CIS will spell for Russia.

[Oniani] Abkhazia remains a dominant theme in Georgian domestic policy. The CIS summit on 19 January discussed the possibility of giving the Russian peacekeeping forces a new mandate and policing functions. What is the current situation in this respect? Will the joint decision on Abkhazia by CIS heads of state be implemented?

[Shevardnadze] The slow progress of work to draw up a new mandate for the peacekeeping forces is giving us serious grounds for concern. Although there is still time and hope that things may improve — and I hope they do — but if there is no real progress before the next CIS summit on 19 May, which is not too far away, a very big question mark will be hanging over the efficiency of Russian mediation. Having said that, I must add that I have always been and still am an active supporter of Russian mediation.

One may ask this question: What is going to happen afterwards? If we fail to get the result which we and the entire world expect to get, then the United Nations, its Security Council, and European structures will need to step up their activity in a radical manner. I hope they will be ready for that.

[Oniani] Do you have the Bosnian option in mind?

[Shevardnadze] Yes, it is possible, although it may be some other option. I do not want to draw parallels between Bosnia and Abkhazia, but there are resources which should certainly be used. I want everyone to realize, including the leaders of the separatist regime in Abkhazia and the relevant officials in Russia and other countries, that peace in the Caucasus is no longer our internal affair alone. It is a problem of international significance, and that is why all international structures have a vested interest in a peaceful Caucasus. [passage omitted]

Estonia

Estonia: Security Official Comments on Alleged IRA Arms Purchase

LD0103174196 Tallinn Estonian Television Network in 1645 GMT 1 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The statement by the British counterintelligence, on the IRA purchasing arms through Estonia, is too hasty, the press secretary of the Security Police said. On Thursday, the weekly EESTI EKSPRESS reported, referring to the British newspaper the DAILY MAIL, that the British MI5 service had information about the IRA having purchased arms via Estonia. According to the British side, at least two meetings took place in Tallinn and in the course of those the IRA purchased arms coming from Russia.

According to Helle Sagris, the press secretary of the Estonian Security Police, there is no firm evidence so far linking these deals with the IRA. According to her, the facts reported in the press are already somewhat dated and call for additional checks. She added that the Security Police deals with this issue as much as it can. [passage omitted: EESTI EKSPRESS reported possible link to consignment of Russian pistols arrested on Estonian border several years ago]

Estonia: Yeltsin Worried Over Orthodox Community in Estonia

LD0103191096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1740 GMT 1 Mar 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Russian ambassador to Estonia Aleksandr Trofimov handed Estonian President Lennart Meri a message from Russian President Boris Yeltsin who expressed concern over the events in the Orthodox community in Estonia, an official in Meri's headquarters told Interfax.

The Estonian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchy) is worried that it can lose its parishes following the registration by the Estonian authorities of the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church which is recognized by the Constantinople Patriarchy. The split between them has resulted in suspension of relations between the Moscow and Constantinople Patriarchies.

Meri, his headquarters say, told Trofimov that he regrets that biased information is being spread about what is going on in the Orthodox community which is canonically subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchy. Meri said that reports by certain journalists that members of the community have been deprived of the possibility to perform religious services are absolutely untrue.

The Estonian legislation, Meri emphasized, "restores the ownership relations that existed in the republic before it was occupied by the Red Army." On the other hand, he said, the believers have every right to take part in the services.

Meri thinks that such matters are up to the church-goers themselves rather than heads of state or statesmen.

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